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PHASES OF CIVIL DISTURBANCES: CHARACTERISTICS AND PROBLEMS



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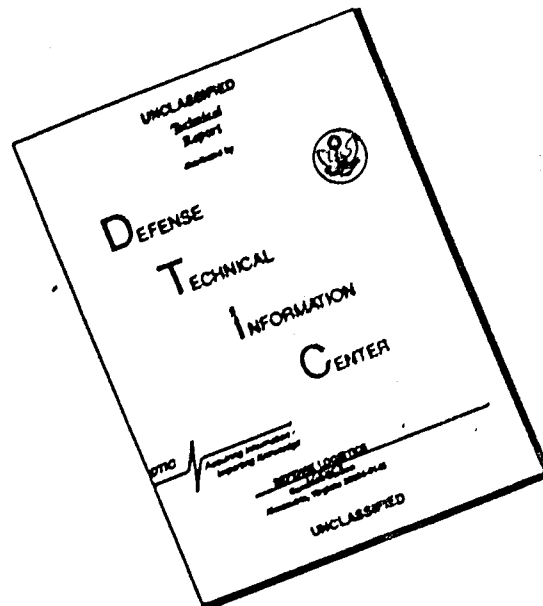
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PHASES OF CIVIL DISTURBANCES: CHARACTERISTICS AND PROBLEMS

by
Carl F. Rosenthal

June 1969



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ABSTRACT

This study elaborates upon phases in the social process that culminate in a civil disorder, applies the most recent data produced by social scientists and law enforcement personnel to this framework, determines key problem areas in maintaining law and order during each phase, and indicates within this framework any approaches that could provide effective countermeasures.

FOREWORD

Episodes of riot, revolt, and insurrection have punctuated the history of the United States. Yet, not since the time of the Civil War has our country experienced such widespread and intense turbulence as it has during the present decade.¹

Hostile outbursts have occurred throughout the country, even in communities that are noted for progressive policies and modern governmental institutions.² In accounting for the seemingly random and unpredictable occurrence of collective disorder, various theoretical and popular explanations have been advanced: criminal subcultures; militant youth; Hobbesian man; subversive manipulation and agitation; frustration and aggression; relative deprivation and heightened aspirations; limited communication channels; racial polarization; conspiracy; external war; the world Socialist struggle; and the progress of social movements.³ Although there is insufficient information to evaluate scientifically the merits of these explanations, there is enough information to permit a plausible reconstruction of the social dynamics underlying civil disorders.⁴

Preventing civil disorders is a complex problem that faces national and local government. While significant advances have been made in improving the techniques of mob and riot control, greater challenges lie ahead. The most advanced thinking in the social and pure sciences must be applied to the problems of developing a systematic framework for identifying the social processes that lead to civil disorders and, within this framework, more sophisticated countermeasures must be devised. Although additional investigation will be required at the hostile phase, greater attention must be focused upon the opportunities for extinguishing antisocial behavior at the earlier phases.⁵ Some students of collective behavior even suggest that, once rioting attains a certain momentum, riot control forces can do little more than contain the spread of violence.⁶ In addition to the interrelationship between the internal security forces and the dissidents, more systematic study is required concerning ways in which the climate of opinion in the general community can affect the actions of the control forces and of potential rioters. Another critical area of investigation involves determining how modern technological devices such as chemical barriers and nonlethal weapons can contribute to the effectiveness of riot control forces.

This report will: (1) elaborate upon a system of phases with which to study the social processes that culminate in a civil disorder; (2) apply the most recent data produced by social scientists and law enforcement personnel to this framework; (3) determine key problem areas involved in maintaining law and order at each phase; and (4) indicate within this framework any approaches that might lead to more fruitful countermeasures.

This study will focus upon the disorders that have occurred in the Negro ghettos. The terms hostile outbursts, civil disturbances, and riots will be used interchangeably to describe this phenomenon. In the broad sense, these terms describe incidents involving crowd behavior during which damage is inflicted upon persons and property in defiance of civil authority. Refining this definition to account for the racial overtones of ghetto incidents, these disturbances are characterized by: (1) a polarization of aggressive individuals into groups on the basis of race; (2) a hostile belief system held by members of a race that ascribes the source of social

problems to the other race; (3) the direction of aggression toward individuals and properties that represent the other race.⁷ This definition encompasses disorders that range from small-scale disturbances during which little damage occurs to violent outbursts of the intensity that occurred in Watts, Hough, and Detroit. It excludes, however, instances of interracial conflict, such as fisticuffs between black and white students, if a protesting crowd bound by race does not form.⁸ Parameters are not set on the scale of violence by this definition. Nevertheless, it stops short of describing riots in terms of insurrection and rebellion. Civil disorders, however, may be a preliminary to the latter.

Although this paper examines the dynamics of collective outbursts that have been occurring in our urban areas, it should be remembered that the violence in the cities is an adjunct of a larger social movement within the country. The growth of rightist and leftist extremist groups on ideological as well as racial grounds indicates the breadth of the movement. Although more sophisticated and humane devices and techniques are required to prevent violations of the law by individuals or groups, primary attention must be directed toward curing the psychological and social ills that engender the deep division within our society.

In advancing the preparation of this study, the author gratefully acknowledges the advice and assistance of Adrian Jones, whose forthcoming publication, "Characteristics of Civil Disturbances" (Center for Research in Social Systems), promises to increase our understanding of urban violence. Naturally, the author assumes full responsibility for the interpretations and conclusions in this research task.

This document was prepared in response to a request made by the U. S. Army Limited War Laboratory, Aberdeen Proving Ground, Maryland. By delineating the social dynamics of recent rioting in the urban ghettos, this report is expected to provide engineers with a wider perspective through which to judge the applicability of riot-control techniques and weapons already being researched and developed, and to indicate new concepts and proposals as well. Only unclassified sources have been used in preparing this document.

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I. INTRODUCTION

COMMUNITY CONTEXT

There is no typical disorder in terms of intensity of violence and extensiveness of damage.¹ Notwithstanding the extreme disorders that occurred in Harlem, Watts, Hough, and Detroit, the majority of civil disturbances are of short duration, involve small numbers of participants, and result in few arrests and little property damage.²

Which factors account for differences in the intensity and magnitude of civil disorders? In the community context, the interactions of the following elements shape the course and character of a civil disorder:³

- (1) militants
- (2) potential rioters
- (3) the internal security forces
- (4) the general population of the community

Militant Leaders

Despite extremist rhetoric, few black militants seriously counsel overthrowing the existing institutions of government. Some have become militant leaders because of the desire to achieve status and prestige within the community. Others have become militants because of their desire to play an active role in securing reforms within the social system that would benefit the black community. The third group consists of a numerically small, although growing, group of militants that operates in terms of a subversive belief system.⁴ Aside from the latter group, frequently it is possible for authorities to cooperate with militants in preventing civil disorders. Since the leaders of traditional civil rights groups have lost considerable influence with the youth of the ghetto, the militants are particularly important sources of information on the temper of youth in the ghetto.⁵

Regardless of the varying motivations, it is undeniable that the black militant leaders have contributed to a mood of acceptance and expectation of violence. At rallies and protest meetings, they have heightened and focused hostility toward "whitey" in general and the white merchants and police in particular.⁶ By pinpointing blame upon these groups and by the continual repetition of phrases and slogans indicative of Negro desires, they have conditioned potentially riotous elements to respond emotionally to events under condition of stress.⁷

Although most militants have confined their activities to rallies and protest meetings, some have played a role during the period when a civil disorder seems imminent and during the riot itself.⁸ Just prior to the disturbance, militants may harangue a crowd into hostile action or serve as a model for subsequent crowd behavior through violations of the law.

During the disorder itself, some militants may attempt to maintain the emotional pitch of the rioters at a high level through verbal encouragement or through committing acts of violence including arson and even sniping. They may operate in the midst of mob activity or on the edge of the riot scene where they are less likely to be detected by control forces.⁹

A subject of great concern to the authorities is whether the disorders have been planned by black militants or others. Although some disorders are suspected of having been previously planned, the prevailing view among social scientists and operational personnel is that most riots have erupted spontaneously as a result of a fortuitous chain of circumstances.¹⁰ Once riots have erupted, however, it seems that militants have assumed a degree of leadership over the course and direction of the violence.¹¹

Potential Rioters

Only a minority of black ghetto residents participates in or approves of civil disorders. Most Negroes turn to the established social structure rather than to revolutionary leaders for solutions to their problems.¹² Control forces must avoid any repetition of Watts, where, in the heat of conflict, virtually all Negroes in the riot area were treated as lawbreakers.¹³ Indiscriminate treatment of Negroes by the internal security forces serves the aims of revolutionaries who desire to deepen the divisions between blacks and whites.¹⁴

Among potential rioters there are distinguishing levels of commitment and motivation. Elements within the community that have the lowest internalization of norms are the real activists in civil disorders and are the first ones onto the streets at a sign of impending violence. Included among the activists are black militant leaders, juvenile gang members, and various kinds of troublemakers.¹⁵ Activists are motivated more by ideological reasons than by profit-making considerations. Another element that goes quickly into the streets are theft groups. Motivated completely by mundane considerations, they hope to use the riot turmoil as a cover for their deviant behavior.¹⁶

If the control forces are unable to reestablish law and order, more timid individuals will join the rioting. In contrast to the activists who sometimes register their protests against society in a riot by sniping and arson, this group is primarily interested in material goods that signify status and position in American society.¹⁷ Compared with the activists, the participants of this group are usually older, have a more stable employment history, and have a higher proportion of women, frequently welfare mothers, in their ranks.¹⁸

General Community

The general community includes the law-abiding black and white citizens of the city. The public-spiritedness of the citizenry may decrease the chances of a large-scale civil disorder.¹⁹ If the citizenry demonstrate in word and deed the desire to help the more unfortunate members of the community, and if the community fully supports the police in the maintenance of law and order and demands modern arrest and courtroom procedures, then there is less likelihood of a disorder. On the other hand, if the citizenry tacitly condone violence as a form of protest, through inaction or indifference, then violence is likely to occur despite whatever progressive policies are enunciated by the authorities at city hall.²⁰

The attitudes and behavior of the general community can also affect the scale of violence during the course of a civil disorder. For moral, political, or other reasons, interest groups

may exert pressure on the authorities of a nature that causes the police to underreact and that delays the arrival of outside assistance.²¹ In Watts, for example, the application of halfway measures led to an intensification of conflict, and the riot ended only after great loss of life and property.²²

Control Forces

The civilian police, the National Guard, and federal troops constitute the internal security forces. The civilian police are the first line of defense in the prevention and control of civil disorders. Because of the weaknesses of other institutions of social control, responsible police measures are crucial in the high-crime ghetto areas where civil disorders are most likely to occur.²³ It has been suggested, however, that the police are not adequately discharging their responsibilities in these areas.²⁴

Newspapers daily highlight the friction between ghettoites and the police. The Kerner report tells us that many Negroes think of the police as symbols of white racism and white repression.²⁵ Because of the strong feelings the police arouse, it has been suggested that they may function as stimuli automatically eliciting aggression from angry Negroes.²⁶ On this basis, some students of law enforcement explain the numerous civil disorders that have followed arrests and shootings by the police.²⁷ Some police chiefs have become so sensitive to the relationship between police actions and the outbreak of civil disorders that they underreact in committing their forces when a riot seems imminent.²⁸

In response to widespread criticism, the authorities have introduced reforms in the police departments. Community relations boards have been established and greater emphasis has been placed upon recruiting Negroes into the police force.²⁹ Police departments also are exploring ways in which nonlethal weapons can be utilized, although their effort in this field is just beginning.³⁰ Despite these innovations, however, the police departments are unlikely to improve significantly until the citizenry demand higher standards for the recruitment of officers and improvements in police practices and techniques.³¹

When the local police force is no longer able to maintain control over a civil disturbance, the governor of the state may mobilize the National Guard or even request the assistance of federal troops. It has been said that paramilitary forces are better suited than the local police for riot control operations. As outsiders, the argument goes, paramilitary forces are not involved in local issues and, therefore, do not elicit from angry Negroes the bitterness displayed toward the police.³² Whatever the validity of this argument, there are many problems that are associated with the callup of paramilitary forces: the time required for the alert, mobilization, and dispatch of forces usually requires several hours; paramilitary forces, particularly the Guard, have only recently begun to receive practice in the small unit tactics required for effective riot control; and the weaponry presently available to paramilitary forces limits adequate flexibility of response. These and other control problems will be considered in more detail in subsequent portions of this paper.

EVOLUTION OF RIOTING

The complex interaction among the various segments of society determines the form that conflict will assume. Depending upon the values of the general community, the belief system of dissident groups, and the posture of control forces, discontent may be quiescent, assume the form of a riot, or develop into a subversive underground movement. There are various phases into which social conflict may develop.

Premobilization Phase

This phase encompasses the period of time when cleavages occur in a society as a result of the growth of beliefs that are hostile to the established order. Cleavages arising from hostile beliefs may have an embryonic period of a few years or several scores of years. A distinguishing feature of this phase is the emergence of militant leaders and of dissident groups. The leaders focus the generalized hostile beliefs of the dissident groups onto specific and highly visible targets, such as the police and white merchants, and suggest to their audiences ways to resolve their problems.³³ In this way, strains are built into the social situation and are ready to be combined with other conditions that may result in some form of collective violence.³⁴ Other conditions that are necessary for a situation of collective violence include: a deterioration of respect for law and order in the general community; the emergence among the dissidents of a quasi-political ideology that sanctions violence as a legitimate form of protest; and the inability of the police to prevent opportunities for violence.³⁵ When these and other conditions exist, an incident that generates strong emotional arousal may create a predisposition to impulsive and aggressive violent behavior.³⁶

Mobilization Phase

If channels through which to register discontent are available, the mobilization phase may occur. During a riot, the mobilization phase is the period of time when crowds form as a result of a precipitating incident that sharpens and focuses the hostility of the aggrieved population. The crowd phase may last a few hours or even a few days.³⁷ During a preinsurgent period, by way of contrast, this phase is marked by the formation of conspiratorial groups, the infiltration of organizations, and the perpetration of initial acts of terrorism.³⁸

It is difficult to predict when an incident will lead to the formation of an acting crowd. Emotion-laden events occur regularly in the tense atmosphere of the ghetto and crowds gather quickly. Even when an aggressive crowd does form as a result of an incident, it may be small in number. Potential rioters, for one reason or another, may be disinclined to join a protesting crowd. Furthermore, the New Brunswick, New Jersey, 1967 example demonstrates how a large, protesting crowd can be pacified and dispersed through persuasion.³⁹ Since mishandling crowds can trigger a riot, the authorities must correctly determine whether the crowd is going to be orderly and, if not, assess whether it will increase to the size where additional assistance is required.⁴⁰

Hostile Outburst Phase

The hostile outburst phase is the period of time when groups of individuals commit serious breaches of peace. Riots may vary widely in terms of intensity of violence and extensiveness of destruction. Moreover, they may last for a few hours or for a period of days.⁴¹ It seems that some of the riots that lasted a number of days could have been contained if the control authorities had responded with sufficient force at the mobilization phase.

A major problem facing the control forces at the hostile outburst phase is to distinguish between lawbreakers and innocent people in the riot area. Virtually every major riot has had its toll of innocent people who were wounded and killed because of curiosity or chance.⁴² The introduction of more advanced nonlethal weapons can provide riot control forces with a greater flexibility of response and, at the same time, lead to a reduction in the toll of casualties.

Posthostile Outburst Phase

This phase begins when the control forces have ended collective violence. It is the time when rioting has ceased but precautionary measures are still in effect and when court action is initiated against those arrested.⁴³ In a wider context, however, it is the time when all segments of the community begin to assess the full consequence of the violence. Unless the general community insists upon the elimination of the conditions conducive to the eruption of collective disorder, civil disorders will continue to occur and could even become an underground movement.⁴⁴

II. PHASES OF CIVIL DISORDER

PREMOBILIZATION PHASE

Traditionally, periods of rapid social transformation have been marked by episodes of riot and revolution.¹ How does social change engender structural disorganization? People internalize a large number of meanings and values to which they adhere. A shared system of attitudes and beliefs enables people of various circumstances to act together in an organized manner. As long as individuals accept their roles and conform to the behavior expected of them, little conflict occurs. When a large segment of society no longer accepts the traditional rules and ideas, however, the accommodative structure breaks down and structural disorganization becomes pronounced.²

Conditions of Collective Behavior

Differential internalization of meanings and values does not necessarily lead to collective behavior. Obstacles to violent outbursts may exist in the forms of suppression, diversions, concessions, and lack of facilities for disorder. In developing a theory to account for the origin and character of hostile outbursts, the following overlapping conditions must be considered in the social situation.³

First, the dissidents must perceive that a crisis exists and must assign responsibility for the crisis to an agency, group, or individual. The police, white merchants, the "power structure," and "whitey" in general are assigned the responsibility for social problems such as poor schools, shoddy merchandise, unemployment and underemployment, substandard living conditions, and racial discrimination.

Second, associational groups accentuate cleavages within the larger community by reinforcing through verbal interaction a hostile system of attitudes and beliefs. Through group activities, dissidents experience a great sense of exhilaration in learning that there are large numbers of like-minded people in the community. Black power groups have been particularly active in widening the division by agitation that provides counternorm sanctions.

Third, the dissidents must believe that the existing institutional mechanisms are inadequate to solve their problems. Many Negro ghettoites, for example, have little faith in the institutional mechanisms for lodging a complaint against police officers, for improving their housing conditions, schools, and so forth.

Fourth, potential rioters must be able to communicate and get in close contact with one another. Person-to-person interaction and other forms of communication enable the spread of rumors that accompany hostile outbursts. Also, ecological and weather conditions help account for the location, timing, magnitude, and form of civil disorders. Warm weather, for example, drives people from their tenements to seek relief in the streets and parks. When large numbers of irritable people are congregated, the probability that an incident will trigger a riot is increased. The spatial distribution of alienated people also accounts for differences

in the form and character of hostile outbursts. Areas of low density population are less likely to become sites of large-scale disorders than crowded neighborhoods.

A fifth basic condition for a disorder is the expectation that violence will be rewarded in some manner. Many aggrieved ghettoites contend that the city administrators listen attentively to their problems only after the eruption of violence. To justify this belief, these Negroes cite the enlargement of national and local programs to help the disadvantaged following the riots.

Finally, there must be facilities for violence and development among the discontented of a quasi-political ideology that sanctions collective disorder as a legitimate form of protest. There are many facets to this phenomenon. The social psychologist, Neil J. Smelser, maintains that periods of hostile outbursts are preceded by a weakening of social control within the various institutional mechanisms and agencies. An indifference on the part of the larger community to crime in the ghettos restricts the ability of the police to maintain law and order, and tacitly facilitates illegitimate means of protest, including collective violence.

Students of collective behavior stress the inhibiting effects of feared retribution on the expression of aggression. On this subject, Ted Gurr maintains that inhibitions against violations of norms can be physical, social, or psychological, the latter being conscience. Whenever agencies of social control are weak, and inhibitions are merely the result of the presence or likelihood of severe external sanctions, as is true in high crime areas, then any diminution in the probability of punishment increases the probability of aggression.⁴

Ghetto Attitudes

Regardless of how they view riots, most blacks feel that the established social system relegates them to an inferior status. In their minds, the city's political system is gerrymandered in a manner to deny them fair representation in the city administration as well as any meaningful representation in local political processes. They believe that the political system is linked to the unjust social conditions of their neighborhoods—substandard housing, inferior schools, dishonest merchants, and so forth.⁵

Inner city residents display particular animosity toward the police who are seen as the chief enforcers of the unjust social conditions.⁶ They complain that the least skilled and self-disciplined officers are assigned to ghetto duty. Unfamiliar with ghetto problems, the police, in their view, harass innocent citizens while allowing juvenile delinquency and organized crime to flourish.⁷ While the majority of ghetto residents see solutions in terms of reforms in police practices, certain militants have urged the removal of the police, vowing a war against them.⁸

In sum, these social problems have engendered among a segment of the black community anger and disenchantment with the so-called "normal channels" for rectifying injustices.⁹

The dissident members of the Negro community have manifested their anger in different ways. For the young, anger has taken the character of a "deep cynicism, a revolutionary fever, and among too many an alarming hatred for whites."¹⁰ For the elderly, anger may be expressed in terms of a complete willingness to loot should the opportunity arise.¹¹

Riot Prone Communities

Given the growth of hostile belief systems among certain segments of the Negro community, the social scientist sometimes is asked to predict which towns and cities at a given period will experience civil disorders. Because of the numerous variables involved, it is not possible to predict, in absolute terms, the time, the form, and the magnitude of a civil disturbance. Little more can be done than to estimate the probability of a civil disorder in terms of the previously outlined conditions for collective behavior. When this is done, it is found that the probability of collective behavior is greater in some inner city areas than in others, but there are present in all ghettos conditions that can lead to collective violence.¹²

Indicators of Riot Virus

Although few cities appear to be immune to the riot virus, usually hostile outbursts do not occur without some prior indications. Law enforcement officers who understand the basis of human behavior that leads to civil disturbance will recognize the following signs as indicators of mounting ghetto tensions: a deterioration in police-community relations, including the occurrence of tension-heightening incidents that involve the police and neighborhood residents; rumors of a particularly threatening form; increased signs of racial friction in the schools; a dramatic rise in the crime level, including mysterious thefts of arms and ammunition; an increase in the size and number of demagogic groups and individuals; the appearance of handbills and other communication devices urging violence; a more casual use of hostile slogans and phrases by residents of the neighborhood; the appearance of a campaign of arson and personal threat that is designed to intimidate white merchants; and incidents of sniping against police.

MOBILIZATION PHASE

The mobilization phase includes the period of time between the precipitating incident and the formation of an angry crowd. During the 1965 Watts riot the mobilization phase was compressed into a few hours,¹³ whereas, there was a lapse of about two days between the precipitating incident and the eruption of rioting during the 1964 Harlem disorder.¹⁴ However, police officers who are familiar with ghetto life know that crowds form regularly when an incident occurs, that not all crowds are aggressive, and that not all aggressive crowds erupt into violence.

For analytical purposes, the mobilization phase may be subdivided into the following components:

- (1) the precipitating event
- (2) the transmission of rumors
- (3) crowd formation
- (4) "milling" of crowds

Precipitating Incident

Because of the previously outlined factors, a segment of the black community is susceptible to strong emotional arousal and violent protest. Under these conditions, an emotion-laden incident may serve as a stimulus to lowering inhibitions and intensifying aggression.¹⁵

According to Smelser, a precipitating factor performs the functions of channeling the "generalized beliefs into specific fears, antagonism and hopes. It confirms the existence, sharpens the definition or exaggerates the effect of the conditions of conducive-ness, strain and generalized aggression."¹⁶ Smelser also asserts that a precipitating factor may operate in different ways. A precipitating incident may confirm or vindicate common fear or hatred of police, merchants, and members of the white race; create an additional deprivation where burdensome conditions already exist; suddenly eliminate an opportunity for peaceful protest; emphasize a failing that requires an explanation from the person or group that is responsible; lead to a hostile outburst that will precipitate additional outbursts; or, it may be a rumor that discloses one of the events cited.¹⁷

Two observations about precipitating events are in order. First, although in virtually every instance an incident can be identified as having immediately preceded the outbreak of a disorder, more than one incident actually preceded the eruption of hostile behavior. On this subject the Kerner commission concluded:¹⁸

We found that violence was generated by an increasingly disturbed social atmosphere, in which typically not one, but a series of incidents occurred over a period of weeks or months prior to the outbreak of a disorder. Most cities had three or more such incidents; Houston had 10 over a 5-month period. These earlier or prior incidents were linked in the minds of many Negroes to the preexisting reservoir of underlying grievances. With each such incident, frustration and tension grew until at some point a final incident, often similar to the incidents preceding it, occurred and was followed almost immediately by violence.

... the prior incidents and the reservoir of underlying grievances contributed to a cumulative process of mounting tension that spilled over into violence when the final incident occurred. In this sense the entire chain—the grievances, the series of prior tension-heightening incidents, and the final incident—was the "precipitant" of disorder.

Second, studies of recent civil disorders indicate that the immediate precipitants have been emotionally based and evidently have not been related to the basic social injustices.¹⁹ Although to the outsider these incidents may seem to be minor, or even trivial, and may in the past have occurred in the same community without evoking violence, symbolically they reflect deeply shared grievances among segments of the ghetto residents. By way of illustration, a routine traffic arrest was the immediate precipitant of the Watts riot.²⁰

To illustrate the emotional character of immediate precipitants, Table 1 presents an incomplete but illustrative listing of precipitants of civil disorders in the United States during the last fifty years.

Rumor

For a riot to occur there must be crowds. For crowds to become aggressive there must be communication about some event that heightens tension and furnishes excuses for hostile behavior.²¹ In addition to the mobilization phase, rumors perform critical functions at the premobilization and at the hostile outburst phase. Allport and Postman discern four stages in the interaction between rumors and violent outbursts.²² The time immediately preceding an outbreak of violence is usually characterized by murmurs of unrest that include tales of

TABLE 1
PRECIPITANTS OF CIVIL DISORDERS

<u>Immediate Precipitants</u>	1913-1963* (N = 76) <u>Percent</u>	1964-May 31, 1968† (N = 239) <u>Percent</u>
Felonious assaults on white women by Negro men	13	9
Police search, assault, arrest or shooting of Negro men or women	20	27
Other interracial murder or shooting	15	4
Interracial rock-throwing or fighting (no mention of lethal weapons)	21	10
Civil liberties, public facilities, segregation, political events, housing	18	10
Use of Negro strikebreakers, upgrading, or other job-based conflicts	7	1
Destruction of American flag by Negroes	1	0
Incendiary speeches by civil rights leaders or black power militants	0	2
Immediate precipitant undetermined	5	20
Other (death of civil rights leader, building blown up, vandals, ambulance failure to respond quickly to Negro heart attack victim, Halloween prank)	0	26

*Data from Stanley Lieberman and Arnold R. Silverman, "The Precipitants and Underlying Conditions of Race Riots," American Sociological Review, XXX, No. 6 (December 1965), p. 889.

† Data from Downes, p. 34.

discrimination, personal affront, and misdeeds that are attributed by one faction to another. The rumors that are circulated at this stage are filled with typical antagonism and rancor; they are very like the common, uncomplimentary tales concerning the unseemly conduct of Negroes or Jews, greedy employers, or brutal police officers. As the tone of such tales intensifies, however, one is led to suspect a pre-riot atmosphere. The tales in themselves do not necessarily lead to violence; they are merely a measure of heightened social unrest and attest to the fact that unless existing conditions are improved, tensions may erupt into violence. The records indicate that, during the summer of 1943 when there were several race

riots and near riots, the preceding months were filled with incidents of heightened rumor-spreading. Whenever such rumors begin to contain specific threats, danger is imminent. During the disturbances in Detroit during 1943, the rumor had been circulated that large numbers of armed Negroes were going from Chicago to Detroit.²³

Frequently, though not always, the immediate cause of a riot is an inflammatory rumor. Tales of an encounter between a Negro soldier and a white policeman in a hotel lobby in Harlem preceded the serious 1943 riot in Harlem. In the intense atmosphere of a riot, rumors spread rapidly; they are characteristically fanatic and are frequently hallucinatory. Rumors of rape, murder, and torture pour forth in a frenzied attempt to justify and encourage further violence.

Rumors reflect all the facets of a hostile belief system—frustration, anxiety, aggression, and omnipotence. The precipitating events and the resulting rumors focus these generalized aggressive beliefs onto specific persons, groups, and events.²⁴

Crowd Formation

A precipitating incident leads to the convergence of numbers of people at the scene of the event. Because numbers of people are usually in the vicinity, they hear about the event and come to investigate. They come for different reasons. In the case of a police arrest, they may come to demonstrate their sympathy for the culprit. This sympathy may derive from the belief that a culprit is innocent or that he is being treated unjustly. Friends and family may also accompany the sympathizers.²⁵ Others who hear about the event come because of curiosity, and still others happen to arrive at the scene as they pass through the neighborhood. Criminal elements often join the crowd because they can exploit the situation for deviant purposes. In addition to supporting individuals, the curious, inopportune bystanders, and criminal elements, there are the activists who attempt to incite the crowd to violence.²⁶ On the other hand, some people come to the scene to pacify the crowd. These include church officials, civic leaders, and the police.²⁷

Experienced police officials realize the importance of events that occur outside the scene of crowd activity. Frequently, knots of people gather at street corners, bars, and at other gathering places to discuss what they saw or heard about the incident. Members of juvenile gangs may collect to consider what they will do if violence erupts.²⁸ In many riots there is evidence that certain individuals and groups purposely remain at the edge of the scene hoping to incite the crowd to action by initiating looting, arson, or sometimes sniping.²⁹

In contrast to the situation in which a crowd spontaneously gathers after an incident, a precipitating incident may occur in the midst of an already gathered group of people. Under the proper conditions, a peaceful crowd can erupt into violence or panic. Civil disorders have occurred, for example, following a fistfight at a dance, a scuffle at a civil rights demonstration, and so forth.³⁰ Since passive crowds can quickly become violent, legal authorities should be aware of the time and place where large groups will assemble and should be knowledgeable about the character of personalities in the group.³¹

Crowd Milling

Crowd behavior seems to undergo certain phases of development. When a precipitating incident occurs in the midst of a group of like-minded individuals, the violent outburst may

occur so rapidly that the workings of this social process are obscured. On the other hand, it is frequently possible to detect aspects of this process when groups of friends and strangers begin to congregate spontaneously after a precipitating incident.

"Milling" is the term that frequently is used to describe the verbal interactions that occur within a crowd. What does milling accomplish? It is a process of informal communication during which individuals in a crowd learn that they share common resentments and grievances.³² Raymond M. Momboisse, a recognized authority on problems of law enforcement, describes with great insight what happens during the milling process.³³

Through the milling process, the crowd excites itself more and more. Individuals will break off to warn friends, enlist recruits, pass on rumors, not only in face-to-face conversation but by telephone, and generate hysterical excitement. More and more people appear on the scene. Some of these are mere bystanders and curiosity seekers while others will immediately join the activity. As the crowd grows, so do the rumors, and through social facilitation, increasingly dangerous behavior is encouraged.

The members of the mob, particularly the more active ones, move around from one small group to another, often aimlessly. There will be an undercurrent of excitement, uncertainty and testing as they contact each other. Words can be used little or not at all; conduct alone may be a rapid, accurate and efficient means of communication. Soon they become vocal. By shouting they further excite one another. They are sure to be warmly sympathetic; they will cheer the smallest act of courage; they will also be profoundly sentimental.

The result is a spiral of stimulation. One excited individual stimulates excitement in another who in turn stimulates a third, who may in turn restimulate the first individual to an even higher pitch of excitement. Thus, by circular influences, stimulation and restimulation of each other, a high state of collective tension and excitement is built up. . . . So anger, resentment, hatred and revenge mount higher and enter into more and more of the personalities of the combatants, consuming all their energies, to the point of utter exhaustion or destruction.

These characteristics of crowd behavior pose serious problems for riot control forces. Although an individual does not lose his sense of identity in a crowd, the members of a crowd who have common dissatisfactions, frustrations, and conflict are more likely to be suggestible to directions issued from among its own than to the advice of outside authorities.³⁴ Moreover, the sheer size of the crowd contributes to each individual's sense of power, righteousness, and universality. Supposing anonymity in a large crowd, these feelings help lower the inhibitions of crowd members.³⁵ Because they are aware of these characteristics, some police departments stress the importance of inserting into a potentially riotous crowd plainclothesmen and others who will offer alternative solutions and suggestions from within the crowd and of reducing a crowd's sense of anonymity through measures such as photography.³⁶ They also emphasize the importance of dispatching sufficient forces not only to the scene of crowd activity but also to adjacent areas where individuals or groups might form to set a model for crowd behavior by initiating acts of violence.³⁷

Indicators of Crowd Disposition

Before deciding upon what actions to take against a crowd, internal security forces should first determine whether a crowd is potentially riotous. As previously mentioned, crowds regularly form in the ghetto in response to an exciting or unusual event. Rough handling of a casual crowd by security forces can bring to the fore submerged hostilities, transforming a passive crowd into a mob.³⁸ Indicators must, therefore, be established for determining the disposition of a crowd. Some of these considerations might be: the events leading to the formation of a crowd; the recent history of violence in the neighborhood; the character of personalities in the crowd; the nature of transmitted rumors, opinions, and sentiments; the evidence of hostile groups on the edge of the crowd scene; and the capabilities of agitated elements.

Watts Disturbance

Oberschall graphically portrays the character of the mobilization phase during the Watts riot. His description enables a better understanding of the relationships between the precipitating event, the spread of hostile rumors, and the formation of aggressive crowds.³⁹

Regardless of what actually happened, the events surrounding the arrest [arrest by a white officer of a Negro for drunken driving] fitted in with preconceptions and the generalized belief about police brutality. In a confusing context such as an arrest in the evening with lots of people milling about and a high noise level it is plausible that apart from a few Negroes who actually eyewitnessed most of the arrest-events, many others pieced out an incomplete perceptual record of these events according to their preconceptions and predispositions. It is particularly important to note the belief and the rumors about the police beating of a pregnant woman. . . . Person-to-person communications in a neighborhood on a hot night, with many individuals hanging around in the streets or in their houses but with windows open, can spread a message rapidly over a large area, and subsequent movement of people reinforced by the sound of police sirens further revealed where the focal point of the action was. It seems plausible then that the original witnesses to the Frye arrest interpreted what they perceived as an act of police brutality, which fitted in with a long prior history of similar behavior that was expected from the police. Later arrivals had no particular reason to question this interpretation of the precipitating event and, sharing the beliefs and emotions of those already present, reacted to it similarly.

The original incident was widely reported in the news media, and in all probability a majority of the entire Los Angeles population knew the next day that a riot had taken place in a particular location in Watts during the previous evening and night. This piece of information in turn acted as a significant clue for the collection of crowds in the vicinity of the original arrest location the following day in the absence of any explicit coordination. Anybody, whether merely curious or wishing to settle an old score with the police, had but the same piece of information to go on, namely the location of the incident of the night before, and knew that everybody else, too, had the same clue to act upon. Hence the original location acted as a magnet and as the focal point for the collection of similarly disposed

crowds on Thursday evening and Friday morning before the riot eventually spread throughout the South Los Angeles area.

HOSTILE OUTBURST PHASE

In terms of collective violence in the ghettos, the hostile outburst phase is characterized by violent acts that are committed by members of one racial group against persons and objects that are symbolic of another racial group. Although all of the hostile outbursts are similar in terms of racial conflict, the form and shape of hostile outbursts vary considerably. The speed of the diffusion of the news of the outburst, the kind of aggression that it evokes, and the speed with which control forces can react, determine the nature of the curve.

Levels of Rioting

Riots provide different kinds of ghetto dwellers with various opportunities to pursue highly varied goals. The longer the disorder persists, the easier it is for individuals to become participants and the more varied are the goals pursued.⁴⁰

Most civil disorders never proceed beyond a very elementary symbolic level where destruction rather than plunder seems to be the primary intent.⁴¹ Members of the crowd test the limits of the law by illegal actions.⁴² Roving bands, employing hit-and-run tactics, commit destructive acts such as window-breaking, car-burning, hurling of firebombs, and, occasionally, sniping.⁴³

The initial stage of crowd behavior evidences a rudimentary division of labor. It involves an active core of participants and a rather passive group of people who just stand around watching from the sidelines. Considerable physical space can separate the activists from the passivists.⁴⁴ The activists are composed of groups of individuals who have the lowest internalization of the norms of the society: black militants, friends of the aggrieved, trouble-makers, and criminals. Several authors call particular attention to the presence of juvenile gangs among the activists. They assert that juvenile groups can strongly influence the course and intensity of the conflict through their organizational structure and hierarchy of command.⁴⁵ Excluding the criminal group, recent studies show that the activists are motivated to a significant degree by hostile ideological beliefs.⁴⁶

In contrast, the larger part of the crowd is passive at this stage. The passive audience is composed of sympathizers, the curious, and inopportune bystanders. Frequently, however, the onlookers will also include militants, exploiters, and instigators who remain passive until opportune circumstances are present.⁴⁷

This is a critical time for the internal security forces. They must reestablish law and order with minimal discomfort or injury to the passive members of the crowd. If the riot control forces are unable to restore order, certain portions of the passive audience will become active as deviant behavior tends to become the norm.⁴⁸

Once various sections of the crowd develop a course of deviant action, the second stage of violence is reached. The crowd begins to establish its own definitions of right and wrong. From the viewpoint of the crowd that it is wrong for the police to antagonize and harass them emerges the norm that it is right for them to teach the police a lesson by burning city-owned automobiles and equipment. From the viewpoint that white merchants exploit the Negro

emerges the norm that it is right for blacks to receive compensation for injustices by looting the shops of the businessmen.⁴⁹ In this respect, riots evidence a primitive effort to establish new bounds of social and economic justice.⁵⁰

In this second stage of rioting, looting becomes the primary goal, although the racial dimension persists.⁵¹ The more daring looters ransack stores not only for their own profit but also for the benefit of the more timid members of the crowd who still hang back on the sidelines. As a carnival spirit develops, arguments sometimes develop between activists who want to burn a store down and the commodity-minded who want to loot.⁵² Another distinguishing feature of this stage is the larger number of women, older men, and employed persons now present in the ranks of the rioters.⁵³

If the social control forces are still unable to restore order, as happened in the 1965 Watts riot, bystanders are swept along in a tide of "we feeling." This third and final stage is marked by an establishment of new property rights. At this stage, looting attains a degree of legitimacy among considerable numbers of the ghetto community.⁵⁴ The almost total absence of conflict or competition by rioters over plundered goods illustrates the new consensus that emerges at this stage. In fact, looting becomes a collective activity as strangers, families, and friendship groups methodically work together. "Big ticket" items become the most sought after prizes as participants openly cart away televisions, refrigerators, and furniture.⁵⁵

Even at this ultimate stage people pursue varied goals and participate at different levels. The activists focus their activities upon fighting the police, obstructing firemen, setting stores on fire, and even sniping. There are others who help themselves to merchandise in stores that already have been broken into. Still others mill about the streets, jeering the police and firemen. Finally, there are those who are just curious observers at the riot scene or who are going about their daily work activities.⁵⁶

Limits of Deviation

No matter how irrational and random collective violence appears, crowd behavior is limited by in-group norms and by the agencies of social control. Various social control agencies such as the internal security forces, civic officials, and religious and community leaders limit the deviations among the riot participants.⁵⁷ Even when the agencies of social control break down and the rioters enjoy temporary immunity from punishment, in-group norms set limits on the types and form of violence. Crowd behavior expresses the emotional needs, resentments, and prejudices of its members.⁵⁸ Violence is primarily directed against the police, police equipment, and white-owned stores, which are the symbols of the rioters' resentments and hostility. On the other hand, rioters usually have spared private houses, churches, schools, libraries, post offices, and other public buildings.⁵⁹

Support for Riots

Studies of high-intensity riots in various cities indicate that only ten to fifteen percent of the Negro community participated in or otherwise supported the disorders. Most ghetto residents disapprove of rioting as a form of protest and think of looting, burning, and shooting as crimes.⁶⁰ It is an open question, however, whether in the future large numbers of Negroes will deny the legitimacy of outside authorities.⁶¹

POSTHOSTILE OUTBURST PHASE

The posthostile outburst phase may be subdivided into an immediate and a derived stage. While the immediate stage concerns the practical measures associated with the restoration of law and order, the derived phase concerns a longer range period when measures are taken to eliminate the conditions that lead to the eruption of violence. In this schema, the posthostile phase overlaps with the premobilization phase in a circular system. The type of corrective measures that are instituted in the aftermath of a civil disorder affects the dissidents' system of beliefs, facilities for violence, and so forth. Depending upon the adjustments that are made in the social situation, therefore, conflict may be submerged, assume the form of riots or perhaps evolve into a highly structured underground movement.

Immediate Stage

This phase begins when the control forces have ended collective violence. Although sporadic incidents may continue to occur, the control authorities have restored sufficient control over the area to prevent a renewal of mass violence.⁶² At this time, the authorities record their observations on the course and nature of the disorder and prepare cases to prosecute those arrested. In high-intensity riots, the widespread burning and looting also require the institution of emergency measures for the care of the dispossessed.⁶³

Derived Stage

As the emotional exhaustion that is produced by the riot subsides, the various segments of the community begin to discuss the meaning and consequences of the violence. Unfortunately, however, the discussions do not usually lead to a purification of the atmosphere. Instead, accusations and counteraccusations are hurled from all sides about the causes of the rioting and what it has accomplished. In a short time, the general community usually loses its interest in the conditions that led to the disorder and settles for approving a larger budget for the control forces.⁶⁴ With this enlarged budget, the response of several police departments has been to buy larger numbers of deadlier weapons, sometimes heavy automatic calibres. Some observers note that there is a spiraling arms race occurring in some cities between the police and a substantial part of the ghetto population.⁶⁵

In the ghettos, militant leaders have been quick to capitalize upon the fading interests of the general community. Through agitation during which acts of violence against whites are condoned, militants are attempting to radicalize the Negro masses.⁶⁶ They have been particularly successful in their appeals to the young, many of whom are now disillusioned with the efficacy of nonviolent protests.⁶⁷ As a result, the older, more conservative civil rights organizations have lost considerable influence among the younger dissidents while extremist organizations have gained in popularity.⁶⁸ Assessing this present situation, the Kerner Commission has concluded that in several cities there has been an increased distrust between black and white, less interracial communication and a marked growth of white segregationist or black separatist groups.⁶⁹

Outlook

Hostile outbursts of varying intensity are likely to recur periodically in our cities. Some authorities suggest that violence has become in the black protest movement an acceptable way

of responding to deprivations. Black militant organizations more than ever advocate covert and overt violent protest.⁷⁰ Moreover, the people have an increasingly sophisticated understanding of how to act and what to do should a riot occur.⁷¹ Even more ominously, if nothing is done to relieve the conditions that prompt hostile outbursts, it is conceivable that underground black organizations could organize widespread campaigns of violence and that white organizations could retaliate with campaigns of counterviolence.⁷²

III. COUNTERMEASURES

PREMOBILIZATION PHASE

How can the social situation be made less structurally conducive to rioting? Preventing hostile outbursts will require a program of action that alleviates the conditions of strain, dispels hostile beliefs, and reduces the facilities for violence. Improving the quality, performance, and techniques of police departments is an important part of such a program. In a democratic society, however, force alone is not a sufficient deterrent against violence. A truly effective program will have to attack the basic social, political, and economic ills that underlie the unrest.¹

Social, Economic, and Political

Cited below are some reform measures that might make the social situation less conducive to rioting. One contributing factor to hostile outbursts is the belief that a crisis exists because of the indifference of local government. The Kerner Commission and other official investigative committees recommend that local government make itself more responsive to the needs of inner city residents through action programs in the areas of housing, welfare, education, and employment.² Most of the suggested programs reflect careful thinking, but improvement is needed. In the area of housing, for example, recommendations usually lead to the construction of large housing projects. This results in an increased population density in a ghetto area with concentrations of large numbers of idle teenagers and adults. An alternative approach might be to lower the population density through changes in housing patterns.³ Another improvement in social control might be to bolster the deprived Negro family through basic changes in the structure of welfare payments and by various kinds of family planning educational programs.⁴ Whatever the scope of the program, however, social scientists caution against extravagant promises that can only result in a more acute sense of deprivation.⁵

Other factors that contribute to hostility are sources of strain that aggravate the cleavages in the social situation. Certain black militant organizations, for example, have accentuated the cleavages between deprived ghettoites and the rest of the community through preaching hate, violence, and separatism.⁶ An antidote to the source of strain that is produced by extremist groups seems to be a greater recognition and support of traditional civil rights groups and, more particularly, local civic organizations. If local civic groups receive widespread support and recognition by the community, they may be in a better position to influence aggrieved ghettoites and, thereby, offer alternative courses of action to riots.⁷

Dissidents also must believe that the existing institutional mechanisms are unresponsive to their problems. Ghettoites often assert, for example, that they do not have effective channels for redress of complaints against police conduct or that the courts favor the merchants and landlords in legal disputes.⁸ In the case of the police, the Kerner Commission urges the establishment or improvement of complaint boards.⁹ Another measure to enhance confidence in the existing institutional mechanisms might be literature, and sometimes legal counsel, which explains to the citizen his rights and obligations in business transactions as well as the legal procedures of small claims courts.

The ability of people who have similar grievances to get rapidly in close contact with each other is another condition for a riot. As previously noted, the housing pattern in the ghetto results in high population densities. Particularly during the summer months large numbers of juveniles and adults congregate in parks and streets. An exciting or unusual event will quickly attract their attention and their presence. More recreational facilities and full- and part-time jobs would seem to be a partial antidote.¹⁰

Another factor that contributes to the likelihood of a hostile outburst is the expectation that violence will be rewarded.¹¹ With some justification, militants have asserted that the recent rioting has served to illustrate dramatically the needs and problems of the deprived ghettoites. Certainly, elected and appointed leaders have a heightened awareness that good community relations necessitate responding to social deprivations, not during the summer months only, but throughout the entire year.¹² Local officials also have stated, however, that rioters will be punished to the full extent of the law.

Finally, for a riot to occur there must be facilities for violence and a diminution in the effectiveness of the institutions of social control. Authorities contend that a criminal subculture is flourishing in the ghettos partly as a result of deficiencies in the police, court, and penal systems. Official reports stress the need for immediate reforms. Police chiefs are taking steps to improve the quality, techniques, and performance of their departments.¹³ Legal experts stress the importance of more modern courtroom practices. Trials should be swift, should ensure fair and impartial justice for all, and sentences should adequately reflect the seriousness of the offense.¹⁴ Moreover, there is an urgent need for improvements in the correctional system if the prisons are to become effective rehabilitative institutes rather than schools for crime.¹⁵

Law Enforcement

Preventing civil disorders is easier than suppressing them. Because providing for the public safety is primarily a local matter, civilian police departments have the responsibility for minimizing the facilities for violence. Through community support of effective law enforcement practices, the police can minimize the scope and intensity of a hostile outburst or can completely deter it. In the premobilization phase, critical police functions include enforcing the law each day in such a way that public confidence and respect is maintained and developing plans to cope with emergencies such as civil disorders.¹⁶

Maintaining public respect for law and order is essential for effective law enforcement. The psychological effect of the threat of force is significantly influenced by the attitude that the public has toward the police. When the threat of coercion is sufficient and respect for the police is substantial, resorting to force may be unnecessary. Among segments of the ghetto population (as well as of the white), there is neither respect for the police nor support for police practices.¹⁷ Common complaints are that the police do not understand the real problems of the ghetto, that they treat most Negroes as potential criminals, and that they are prone to use excessive force.¹⁸ Abrasive relations between police and ghettoites have existed in all cities that have experienced major civil disorders.¹⁹

A major dilemma faces city administrators. The policeman in the ghetto is the most visible symbol of a society from which many Negroes are alienated. At the same time the need for policemen is greater in the ghetto than in other parts of the community because of the ineffectiveness of the other institutions of social control. The presence of large numbers of police, however, does not ensure respect for the law if there is hostility within the

community. City administrators and police chiefs agree that new and creative approaches are required to earn the support of the ghetto community for effective law enforcement.²⁰

While recognizing that the education and training of law enforcement personnel has improved dramatically during the past decade,²¹ the Kerner Commission sees the need for further reforms in police-community relations:²²

- (1) The need for change in police operations in the ghetto to insure proper conduct by individual officers and to eliminate abrasive practices.
- (2) The need for more adequate police protection of ghetto residents, to eliminate the present high sense of insecurity to person and property.
- (3) The need for effective mechanisms for resolving citizen grievances against the police.
- (4) The need for policy guidelines to assist police in areas where police conduct can create tension.
- (5) The need to develop community support for law enforcement.

Although the Kerner report treats these problem areas in detail, it does not consider an equally crucial problem area. Several major riots and scores of minor ones have been precipitated by police shootings. These incidents have occurred in attempts to apprehend a fleeing subject or to subdue a recalcitrant individual.²³ For many of these situations, the standard police weapons—the revolver and nightstick—were inappropriate.

Some of the riots might never have occurred if the police had had a wider choice of weapons at their immediate disposal. More important, perhaps, is that future disorders could be averted by supplementing the standard police weapons with middle range ones that are humane and revocable in their effects.²⁴ A chemist, prominent in the field of weaponry, sums up his feeling in the statement that nonlethal weapons would facilitate the discharge of the policemen's duties in situations for which they are not adequately equipped and also provide more moderate and effective means of dealing with some situations which they cannot now handle.²⁵ In addition to providing police officers with added dimensions of force, others argue that middle-level weaponry might also dampen the spiraling arms race occurring between the police and segments of the ghetto community.²⁶

Numerous types of middle-range weapons have been developed or are in the process of being developed.²⁷ Of these, chemical agents appear to be the most promising in terms of providing law enforcement officials with graduated and controlled levels of force.²⁸ Under development or already developed are several hand-held chemical weapons that contain tear gas or other irritants. They can be dispensed from batons, cans, and pistols.²⁹

Many citizens and law enforcement officials express reservations about chemical weapons. With justification, citizens contend that many chemical agents have not been satisfactorily tested. Certainly, procedures must be established to evaluate systematically the immediate and long-range effects of these weapons and to inform the public about their use, limitations, and effectiveness. Public aversion to the use of dogs, tear gas, and the electric baton resulted from the lack of adequate reportage and evaluation.³⁰ On the other hand, an apprehension of the police officer is that nonlethal weapons might replace the revolver. In actuality, chemical weapons are not likely to replace firearms, but rather serve as a supplement and, in some circumstances, a new alternative to their use.³¹

Planning

The conditions of civil disorders are present in virtually all cities. The premobilization period is the time when the authorities develop plans of action to cope with emergencies such as civil disorders.³² Law enforcement officials recognize the need for civil disturbance plans that are flexible and applicable both to small incidents and to major disorders.³³

Good intelligence is necessary for effective planning. Prepared administrators recognize the importance of intelligence both for planning purposes and for assisting in determining the nature and location of potential disorders. Since the summer riots, many city police departments assign trained personnel, operating overtly and covertly, on a full-time basis to these duties.³⁴ Intelligence units derive their assessments from sources such as local civic groups, business persons in the area, school officials, welfare, recreation and social workers, teenage gang leaders, athletic groups, rumors, speeches and gatherings, informants and contacts, and statistics such as arrest patterns, crime reports, resisters to arrest, and assaults on officers.³⁵

The Kerner report and other official studies have cited the need for improving intelligence operations, particularly in the following three critical areas. First, the police must identify militants, known troublemakers, and other antisocial elements who would be quick to join in and aggravate a potential civil disorder. Careful updating of biographies of key personalities is essential. Second, the police must identify and maintain communication with the dissident elements of the community. Intelligence experts should assess the potential number of rioters and their immediate and projected aims, types of action and degree of violence to be expected, and locations where crowds probably would form. Third, the authorities must maintain communication with the leaders and citizenry of the dependable segments of the ghetto community.³⁶ Dependable elements can be invaluable sources of information and serve as counterrioters during a civil emergency.³⁷

Intelligence activities also serve to unveil many hostile rumors. Most police officials recognize the importance of combating rumors at the times when hostile crowds form and when rioting occurs. Just as essential, however, is the need to counteract rumors at the premobilization phase. Hostile rumors not only heighten tensions but also can be the catalyst of a civil disorder.³⁸ Rumor collection centers can serve, therefore, to dispel erroneous beliefs and grievances, and may heighten community confidence in the efficiency and impartiality of the police.

On the basis of intelligence findings and internal considerations, the state and local authorities develop contingency plans. In evaluating their applicability, law enforcement officials should direct particular attention to the following problem areas: mobilization of forces; training and equipment of officers; designation of authority within and between agencies; laws and ordinances applicable to the control of crowds and rioting; facilities for communication within and between agencies; centers for emergency aid and medical treatment; arrangements for logistical support; dissemination of information to the public; facilities for the apprehension and detention of suspects; and procedures for the administration of justice. The performance of social control agencies in several of these planning areas will be evaluated in subsequent portions of the study.

MOBILIZATION PHASE

During the past five years almost all metropolises have had to cope with protesting crowds on the brink of rioting. In most instances, the local authorities were able to calm the

dissidents with a minimum of personal injury and material destruction. In some instances, however, serious rioting did occur. Social scientists agree that preventing large civil disorders depends upon appropriate countermeasures at the time when protesting crowds are forming.³⁹

General Principles for Controlling Mobilized Crowds

The character of crowd formation and behavior provides the basis for developing an effective set of principles for controlling agitated groups (see pages 13-19). For a hostile crowd to form, there must be a precipitating incident. Such an incident usually lowers inhibitions and intensifies aggression. Eyewitnesses or the mass media may be the original sources of information about the event. Accounts of the event, however, are rapidly transmitted to families, friends, and strangers; during this process the information is frequently distorted, and the resulting rumors heighten hostility and sharpen aggression. Upon hearing the rumors, people in the vicinity begin to congregate at the scene of the incident and at other locations, forming larger and larger crowds. A process of verbal interaction, known as milling, occurs in the crowd. Through the milling process, the crowd becomes increasingly excited, and collective tension and anger spiral. At times, the hostile outburst follows the precipitating event so rapidly that violence seems to explode. Usually, however, the period of mobilization continues from a few hours to a few days. During this crucial period, the agencies of social control must react quickly and decisively.⁴⁰

Based upon the nature of crowd behavior, the operational principles that can be applied to control crowds as well as mobs can be summarized as follows.⁴¹ Following the investigation of an incident, supervisory personnel must determine whether a threatening crowd will form and, if so, calculate its potential size and danger. If a threatening crowd seems likely to form, adequate numbers of security forces must be rapidly mobilized and suitably deployed. The deployed forces must maintain a posture of self-confidence and self-discipline, and must remain impartial to the issues and controversies that agitate the crowd. The authorities must counteract the spread of hostile rumors and subdue crowd aggressiveness. If the crowd must be dispersed forcibly, forethought must be used in selecting routes of escape so that the retreating crowd does not erupt into panic or pass through areas that are likely to be the target of aggression. When the police disperse the crowd, they should act in a methodical and determined manner but without excessive force. As the crowd disperses, special arrest teams should be sent into action to seize the leading agitators and instigators of violence. The control forces should follow the dispersed groups at a discreet distance to ensure against regrouping at another location. Finally, the authorities must not delay in requesting outside assistance if the situation deteriorates beyond the control of local forces. Studies of recent civil disorders, however, reveal the inability or failure of the control forces to heed these principles.

Crowd Classification

Crowds form regularly in the ghetto (as well as in other parts of the community) in response to an exciting or unusual event. Police officers who are familiar with ghetto life know that not all crowds are aggressive and that not all aggressive crowds erupt into violence. They also know, however, that given the proper stimuli passive crowds can suddenly become aggressive.

Social scientists have categorized crowds according to interests, social composition, purpose, religion, and so forth. A particularly helpful classification is one that is based upon motivation. On this basis, crowds may be categorized as casual, conventional, or expressive.⁴² A casual or physical crowd is a temporary collection of people who happen to be present at a given location. It has no unity or organization. Examples of this type of crowd are individuals who gather to await public transportation or to admire merchandise in a store window. Traffic control will usually handle such a crowd.

Conventional or cohesive crowds assemble at a designated site for a preplanned occasion such as a sporting event or parade. Although the members of this type of crowd have similar interests and a common focus, usually they think and act as individuals. Law enforcement officers maintain that conventional crowds should be well-policed. To assist in maintaining order, the police can depend upon supervisory personnel such as ushers, teachers, student leaders, and others.

Expressive or revelous crowds are so named because their participants are involved in expressive behavior such as dancing or singing. Sometimes police officers mistakenly confuse this type of crowd with an aggressive one. In fact, several riots have erupted as a result of the forceful dispersal of expressive crowds. Although law enforcement officials counsel that this type of crowd be kept under close surveillance, they urge that the police use tactful techniques in dealing with overzealous crowd members. Sponsors of the event also can be relied upon to help maintain order.

Mobilized Crowds

All crowds are susceptible to rioting and panic. As long as they remain orderly, however, they are not "mobilized" crowds. In contrast, mobilized crowds form under the stimuli of hostile beliefs. They may form spontaneously such as when people converge upon hearing rumors about an incident or they may be planned such as when people congregate at a demonstration or rally. Mobilized crowds usually form to protest general societal conditions or a specific instance of social injustice and they are prone to engage in uninstitutionalized means of redress.

Mobilized crowds present security forces with critical problems. A common characteristic of all major riots was the rapid buildup of crowds. Actually, the crowd may enlarge so rapidly that the police cannot respond quickly enough to control the situation.⁴³ Even when there is sufficient reaction time, however, authorities have sometimes lost control of the situation by failing to take decisive action. Delay in using force may encourage the spread of violence.⁴⁴ Another police problem results when the general population of the city is unaware that protesting crowds are forming or that rioting is occurring. During the Watts (1965), Chicago (1966), and Atlanta (1967) disturbances, for example, unaware citizens stumbled into areas where rallies and demonstrations were in progress. In these cases, the news media gave the initial notification to the public of the beginning of a riot.

Prediction of Mobilized Crowds

A major problem of security forces is the prediction of mobilized crowds. Even routine incidents may draw large numbers of hostile people together. For this reason trained investigative officers should be immediately dispatched to areas where alienated individuals are inclined to congregate. They must assess the potential size of a hostile crowd as well as the

speed with which it will gather.⁴⁵ Failure to properly evaluate the situation can result in the eruption of violence before the security forces have had sufficient time to react.

Law enforcement officials base their predictions upon several factors. An adequate intelligence system will reveal the nature of opinions and sentiments about the event, the character of rumors, the presence of prominent agitators in the area, and discussions of any plans for violence.⁴⁶ The type of disturbance, the events leading to the disturbance, and the psychological background of the population are other helpful indicators.⁴⁷

Although police departments have greatly improved their ability to predict hostile crowds, increasingly sophisticated approaches are necessary. Numerous suggestions have been offered. Many cities need to improve their intelligence techniques and emphasize the more effective use of undercover agents. Aerial observations may reveal any significant disruptions in the pattern of daily activity. Better use of statistical data such as resistance to arrests, false fire alarms, and so forth, also might contribute to the development of more effective prediction criteria.

Police Reaction

If a threatening crowd appears likely to form, supervisory officials must use the appropriate mobilization plan. An effective plan will specify systematic procedures for the rapid notification, briefing, transportation, and deployment of all personnel designated for riot-control assignments.⁴⁸ Special mobilization procedures are essential because normal operational principles will not enable the police force to assemble enough personnel to maintain control over the crowd. If the control forces are able to react quickly and with sufficient force, they will be able to change the structure of the social situation by reducing the facilities for violence.

Law enforcement officials acknowledge that the police must be deployed in areas other than those near the scene of crowd activity. A major tactical error in the 1968 Chicago disturbance, for example, was the failure of police to deploy sufficient manpower in other sensitive areas, particularly near the headquarters of juvenile gangs.⁴⁹ If there are high buildings in the affected area, operational priority should also be given to controlling the rooftops. Moreover, adequate reserve force should be kept nearby should the situation deteriorate.

Until recently, even major police departments did not have mobilization plans that satisfied minimum criteria. A primary reason was that prevailing thinking emphasized the mobilization of personnel already on duty.⁵⁰ Since many riots have erupted during early morning hours when only a fraction of the force was on duty, the problems associated with mobilization were formidable. Communities have attempted to solve the mobilization problem by various approaches. For example, New York and Chicago have special riot-control squad cars on round-the-clock duty; the city of Philadelphia has riot-control forces riding in rented buses that cruise the outskirts of potentially troublesome areas.⁵¹ Different approaches have been taken by smaller cities and towns that cannot afford a large police force and expensive riot equipment, such as signing mutual aid agreements with neighboring communities that provide reciprocal assistance in the event of an emergency.⁵²

Discipline and Determination

Once adequate forces are assembled, most authorities agree that the show of force is the most effective initial approach.⁵³ The purpose of this tactic is to convince the crowd that the

police are capable of maintaining law and order and of dispersing the mob with physical force if necessary. From the psychological perspective, one social scientist avers that the saturation of the affected area with police produces strong inhibitions against violence and leads to the subsiding of tensions.⁵⁴ It also reduces the sense of security afforded the individual in a large crowd. If the riot-control forces are elaborately outfitted with riot-control helmets, gas masks, and weapons and if they appear from helicopters, the shock effect on the crowd may be enhanced. An impressive display of police power probably will induce the more timid members of the crowd to withdraw from the scene and discourage others from joining the crowd.⁵⁵

On the other hand, almost all law enforcement experts agree that too weak a display of force might be worse than none at all.⁵⁶ Since crowds appear to take their cues from police activity, a deficient show of strength parades weakness and, therefore, may invite aggression. If the community is unable to assemble a sufficient display of force, the general rule is to keep available personnel in the rear and engage in defensive tactics until adequate manpower can be mobilized.⁵⁷

The major problem that is associated with the show of force tactic is the failure of the police (as well as national guardsmen) to observe the cardinal rules of impartiality, firmness, and self-discipline.⁵⁸ Studies of recent disorders illustrate instances when the security forces became emotionally involved in the issues that moved the crowd.⁵⁹ At times, police at the scene have stimulated crowd aggressiveness by exchanging insults, by threatening gestures, or by hesitating to take action. Intemperate or irresolute behavior may trigger a protesting crowd into a violent mob.⁶⁰

Disciplined security forces expect to receive and are prepared to resist verbal abuse that is designed to provoke intemperate action. In controlling crowds, they recognize the importance of faithfully complying with the laws and of developing sufficient self-confidence and expertise to avoid the twin dangers of panic and excessive force.⁶¹ Discipline of this sort is developed at riot training schools. In actual field operations, seasoned commanders and on-line supervisory personnel oversee that their forces maintain proper standards of discipline.⁶²

In commenting upon the responsibilities of the security forces, Mombousse suggests that all weapons be concealed unless it is necessary to display them. Displaying batons and guns in a provocative way frequently causes antagonism and encourages conflict. He advises security forces not to bluff, to avoid bodily contact, and to remain outside the crowd. He also recommends being especially observant of spectators and of crowd leaders, and suggests using crowd psychological techniques.⁶³

Counteracting Hostile Rumors and Crowd Cohesion

As previously mentioned, control forces must counteract the spread of hostile rumors to avoid the multiplication of crowd strength and must interrupt the milling process to prevent heightened crowd cohesion and aggressiveness. By understanding the character of crowd behavior, experienced police officials have dispersed potentially violent groups without resorting to force.⁶⁴ Achieving this objective involves changing the structure of the social situation and altering the psychological frame of reference of the individual crowd members.

An impressive display of police force is one aspect of changing the structure of the social situation.⁶⁵ This tactic reduces the opportunities for lawless actions. Emergency measures such as the curfew can also reduce the facilities for violence. Keeping people at home limits

the spread of hostile communications and discourages curiosity seekers and others from joining the crowd.⁶⁶

Another important facet in reducing the structural conduciveness for rioting is isolating the affected area. The intent of this measure is to arrest the spread of hostile rumors to adjacent parts of the community and to deter troublemakers and curiosity seekers in other parts of the community from joining the crowd. The so-called "security lock" also lessens the likelihood that unaware citizens will stumble into the troubled area and encounter physical abuse by the crowd or police. Only authorized vehicles and personnel should be allowed to enter the affected area. For this reason, the mass media should broadcast warnings to avoid the troubled area, the staff and facilities of rumor centrals should be expanded, and the public transit authorities should re-route service.⁶⁷

The procedures for placing barriers along the inner and outer perimeters are well-established. Concertina wire, wooden horses, and police automobiles are the standard barricades.⁶⁸ Because of manpower and other problems, however, considerable thought has been given to the development of new types of barriers. Among the suggested barriers are foams and slippery and sticky materials.⁶⁹ Some of these devices may be used to seal entrances of alleys and secondary streets and to protect public facilities and private property. In considering their application along primary routes, however, it should be remembered that emergency vehicles will need safe and unencumbered access into and out of the riot areas.

The second dimension for nonviolent crowd dispersal involves altering the psychological frame of reference of the individual crowd members. Police officers are familiar with various psychological means to reduce an individual's sense of unity and security in a crowd. Given the dynamics of crowd behavior, individuals in a group are highly suggestible to persuasion. For this reason, police departments have sent Negro plainclothesmen into the streets to fight rumors, discredit agitators, and offer to the crowd alternative courses of action to riots. Frequently, community leaders also can be persuaded to enter the crowd and counsel individuals whom they know against violence.⁷⁰ Since counteracting crowd cohesion from within appears to be a promising technique, further investigation to improve police performance in this area is essential.

In addition to counteracting crowd hostility, plainclothesmen and community leaders can serve as important sources of intelligence. They can make known the current rumors, assess the disposition of the crowd and identify the prominent agitators. All counterrioters should, of course, prominently display identification insignia.⁷¹ During the Watts disturbance, failure to display insignias prominently, combined with instances of police overreaction, resulted in interference with and arrest of Negro plainclothesmen.⁷²

In addition to employing counterrioters, there are other psychological approaches to diminishing crowd cohesion. On numerous occasions, community leaders or local officials have helped to disperse potentially dangerous crowds.⁷³ A successful approach involves offering the crowd one or more courses of action that can be followed before dispersing it. These courses of action may include permission for members of the protest crowd to present their community's grievances. The potentially riotous crowd in New Brunswick, New Jersey, (1967) voluntarily disbanded after the mayor agreed to investigate a list of complaints.⁷⁴ In Cambridge, Maryland, confrontations between Negroes and mobilized guardsmen occur periodically in an almost ritualistic fashion. Aware of crowd psychology, the commander of the National Guard allows the crowd members to publicly voice their grievances and to make token gestures of defiance. As a result of these mutual concessions, the crowd disperses and the guard disbands without loss of face on either side.⁷⁵

For persuasion tactics to be effective, of course, the crowd members must be able to hear the message. If the crowd is large and noisy, the bullhorn might be inadequate. Therefore, for such occasions many cities use loudspeakers mounted on trucks or helicopters. The helicopter may also be used to drop leaflets urging the crowd to disperse.⁷⁶ Once the crowd reaches a high state of emotional tension, however, persuasion tactics usually are not effective. During the 1965 Watts riots, Dr. Martin Luther King unsuccessfully attempted to calm hostile crowds. In the 1967 Atlanta disturbance, Mayor Ivan Allen's personal appeals at the scenes of the disturbance went unheeded.⁷⁷

Even when crowds reach the milling stage and are impervious to persuasion, it is still possible to use crowd dispersal methods that require minimal levels of force. In developing new techniques, the guiding principle is to diminish the sense of unity by causing confusion, destroying anonymity, and engendering anxiety. At earlier stages of crowd activity, photography can be helpful in achieving this effect. At the milling stage, however, more severe techniques are warranted.

Engineers have offered promising suggestions. A possible answer might be a class of weapons called catacybernetics. The use of delayed feedback in the agitator's voice by employing the acoustic telescope and bullhorn can cause him to stammer or can render him speechless. Intense background noise can not only drown out the voice of an agitator but also cause intense anxiety and confusion among the crowd participants.⁷⁸ Another means of destroying the identity and unity of a mob might be through the generation of a water fog. The droplets would have to be completely harmless to the crowd participants yet cause disorientation. If a dye were incorporated in the fog, many uncommitted individuals would rush home to remove the evidence of crowd participation. In this way, the security forces would accomplish the objective of destroying the feeling of anonymity and also separate the passive from the hardcore members of the crowd. Further possibilities involve exploiting certain physiological responses to flickering lights that could cause temporary blindness and confusion or the use of intense lighting that could cause physical discomfort as well as diminish the sense of anonymity.⁷⁹ An interesting device to disperse crowds was used in Paris during the 1957 disturbances. Wind machines were used in narrow streets where their power blew up dust and debris in the faces of the crowd members, causing them to withdraw in confusion. In using these or other humane devices, authorities should consider not only the need for systematic evaluation but also the importance of receiving community acceptance for the use of the weapon systems.

Arcs and Routes of Mob Dispersal

If personal appeals and the show of force fail to disperse the crowd, the only alternative may be forcible dispersal. Before any move is made to disperse the mob, however, the security forces must select the appropriate areas of dispersal and routes to be used. Recently, the most common mistakes have been: providing too few avenues of escape; selecting inappropriate routes; stampeding the crowd; and permitting crowd members to use unauthorized avenues of escape.⁸⁰

Care should be taken to provide the crowd with several avenues of withdrawal. In this way, the security forces can more easily divide the crowd into small units and, thereby, destroy the communication process that leads to collective violence.⁸¹ The security forces should avoid routes where commercial establishments and public service installations are located. Stampeding the crowd can engender violence and panic. If the crowd members feel trapped, they may go on a rampage, trampling people and destroying all objects in their path.⁸²

In selecting areas of dispersal, Raymond Momboisse warns of the consequences of channelling the mob along streets on which industrial and commercial establishments are located. He maintains that the rioters should be dispersed into the area in which they live or into an open area.⁸³

A major problem of the security forces is to ensure that the retreating crowd uses the predesignated routes. During the 1967 Detroit disturbance, for example, many of the hard core crowd members escaped and regrouped in side streets and alleys.⁸⁴ Engineers have suggested new devices for controlling crowd movement. Among these are foam agents, smooth wire, conductive tape guns connected to shock coils, and smoke generators.⁸⁵ In the development of criteria for the applicability of devices such as these, engineers should consider that emergency vehicles will need several access routes into and out of the affected area and that crowds are susceptible to panic when they feel trapped.

Crowd Dispersal

Once all is ready, the order is given for dispersal. The command to disperse and the routes to be used should be clearly heard by all members of the crowd. Undercover agents may be positioned at the rear of the crowd to ensure that the entire crowd hears the instructions. If the crowd refuses to obey the order, the authorities must act quickly and decisively. During recent civil disorders, however, the authorities have vacillated in the use of force, and have thus encouraged the crowds to act.⁸⁶

More than sixty years ago, in his study Reflections on Violence, George Sorel related that indecision in the use of force and hesitation to accept responsibility for its use when it is clearly called for will be interpreted as a sign of weakness. In the end, vacillation encourages more disorder and eventually requires the imposition of measures more harsh than those which would have sufficed in the beginning.⁸⁷

The lack of suitable weaponry may be one factor that explains the indecision of the authorities. Officials recognize that in or near the crowd are many innocent people. Moreover, the housing pattern in the ghetto sometimes excludes the use of certain middle-range weapons which, in open areas, would be appropriate. During the 1964 Harlem riot, tear gas was excluded because of the resulting danger to occupants of the tenement buildings, many of whom were children. In some situations, the use of high-pressure water hoses may also present significant dangers. The pressure of the water shatters business and tenement windows, propelling fragments of glass throughout the area and into apartments. For similar reasons, weapons that fragment or ricochet may cause needless injuries, engender charges of police brutality, and perhaps impel the crowd to panic. Firing at the crowd or into the air, of course, is prohibited under most circumstances.⁸⁸ Many legal authorities also contend that it is not advisable to send police units into a large crowd because the jostling may result in a battle during which both sides employ force indiscriminately.⁸⁹

Until more refined methods are developed, tear gas and vomit agents are, for most circumstances, the most suitable nonlethal weapons available to the security forces.⁹⁰ In dealing with small crowds, the New York City police department frequently has found that horses are effective. Special batons for riot control purposes are available for mounted officers. There are considerable dangers associated with the use of horses, however, particularly if the police are not able to prevent people from hurling missiles and firebombs from rooftops.⁹¹

Arrests

An effective way to destroy crowd action is through arrests.⁹² Given the nature of crowd behavior and the resources of police departments, the major problem is determining who should be arrested and when and how the arrest should be made. The general rule is to avoid arrests for truly minor offenses.⁹³ Mass arrests impose a severe strain upon the finances and manpower of both the police and courts. Instead, the agitators and instigators should be arrested by undercover agents. The leaders supply the initiative, serve as the rallying points, and sustain the emotional level of the crowd. Without leadership, the crowd members soon begin to feel confused, bewildered, and insecure.⁹⁴

When and how to remove the leaders is a crucial decision for the police commander to make. If the police move into a milling crowd to arrest agitators, they might trigger the crowd to violence.⁹⁵ A logical approach would seem to be the arrest of agitators after the nonlethal weapons have been used to disorient the crowd members. As the crowd disperses, special arrest teams, which include a recording and photography officer, would move in to capture the suspected agitators. These teams should work tactfully and deliberately so that the quality of the arrest will not be impaired. By presenting the district attorney with precise and legally documented evidence on the nature of the offense, successful prosecution will occur.⁹⁶ Because arrest and evidence procedures are complicated, law enforcement officers need new technological devices to simplify their tasks.

Pursuit and Prevention of Regrouping

In some instances, the security forces have committed the error of not pursuing the dispersed elements of the group. As a result, elements of the crowd have regrouped at other locations, and have regained a spirit of aggressiveness and unity.⁹⁷ Therefore, once a crowd has been dispersed, it must be kept moving and eventually be fragmented.⁹⁸ The security forces cannot relax their vigilance until the restoration of peace and order is attained.

Outside Assistance

Large, hostile crowds have formed because the local police did not react quickly, decisively, and forcefully enough during the initial period of crowd behavior. Many serious riots have erupted because of the reluctance of officials to request outside assistance even when the size and anger of the crowd clearly indicated that the city police department no longer had the manpower and resources to control the situation.⁹⁹ A needless delay may result in great loss of life and property.

If serious disorders appear imminent, at the earliest moment possible officials must alert the state police and national guard as well as other agencies that can provide assistance. Early reaction is necessary because, at present, operational procedures do not enable outside forces to mobilize quickly. The Kerner Commission ascertained, for example, that it requires an average of four to six hours to mobilize an effective complement of national guardsmen.¹⁰⁰

Despite elaborate plans specifying the terms and arrangements for outside assistance, numerous problems have arisen when the guard and other forces have been mobilized. Coordination of local law enforcement and national guard personnel and equipment during riot operations has been a particular problem. Even local police and fire departments have had difficulty coordinating their efforts. Moreover, control strategies must be improved. These and other problems will be discussed in subsequent portions of the paper.

HOSTILE OUTBURST PHASE

Riot control forces frequently do not or cannot apply the appropriate countermeasures at the mobilization phase and violence ensues. During the initial stages, the activists are foremost in the ranks of the lawbreakers. They test the limits of the law by destructive acts such as window-breaking and car-burning. During this time, the majority of the protesting crowd watches the violence from the sidelines while awaiting the response of the control forces. Usually, the security forces are able to mobilize and deploy sufficient men to deter the spread of violence. Overwhelmed by the display of force, the protesting crowd soon loses enthusiasm and disbands. In other cases, however, the control forces have reacted in a fashion that elicits aggressive behavior. Whenever this happens, certain segments of the crowd join the violence with the result that widespread arson and looting occur. Rioting reaches the most intense stage when the forces of law and order lose complete control over the situation. At this stage, the more timid members of the crowd as well as other people in the vicinity join the rioting, and intensify the disorder and confusion.

High intensity riots provide different types of ghetto dwellers with various opportunities to pursue highly varied goals. The activists vent their hostility by fighting the police, obstructing firemen, setting fire to stores, and assaulting white motorists and reporters. Their weapons consist of anything that is available or can be made quickly—bottles, bricks, rocks, chunks of asphalt, roofing shingles, and firebombs. During some disorders, there also have been confirmations or suspicions of sniping. The activists attempt to throw the security forces off balance by committing acts of violence in hit-and-run style. Their intention is to disorient the security forces and to divert them from the mission of protecting business establishments. In this way, they provide the cover under which the commodity-minded pursue looting, which is their principal goal. People who merely goad the security forces from the sidelines also provide cover for the looters. Aside from the criminal groups, most looters (as well as jeerers) present little threat against the lives of the security forces. Usually they can be handled with a minimum of force.¹⁰¹

Strategy of Riot Control Forces

There is some disagreement about the strategy that security forces should employ during a high-intensity riot. Several authorities note that in some riot-torn cities, the strategy of withdrawing the police force from the affected area led to a reduction in the scale of violence.¹⁰² In these few instances, however, prominent black leaders who had considerable authority in their community were willing to use this influence to end the violence if the city officials, in turn, would be responsive to ghetto grievances. Most students of law enforcement contend, however, that there are few cities in which community leaders wield enough influence to end a riot.¹⁰³ In their view, the primary strategy would be to blanket the troubled area with security forces and to impose strictly enforced restrictions on movement and congregation.¹⁰⁴ With some exceptions, the proponents of this strategy do not exclude the help of community groups or youth gangs.¹⁰⁵

The operational requirements that are associated with the strategy of saturation include those outlined in the mobilization phase. Security forces must be rapidly mobilized and deployed, the troubled area must be isolated to prevent the spread of violence, hostile rumors must be counteracted, arrests must be made with sufficient legal documentation to ensure successful prosecution, and so forth.

Despite some similarity in operational requirements, however, there are considerable differences in terms of manpower and equipment needs. Few cities have a police department that is large enough to effectively combat a high-intensity outburst by relying entirely upon its own resources. Additional assistance from neighboring police departments, the state police, and the National Guard is usually needed.

Problem of Coordination

Almost all cities and towns have developed plans to cope with civil disorders of varying intensities. Although it is impossible to anticipate every contingency, these plans usually are prepared with painstaking thought and detail. In these plans, procedures are specified for obtaining the assistance of outside agencies as well as for mobilizing all required internal resources. Nevertheless, recent experiences have indicated that no matter how adequate plans may look on paper, they may not work effectively in practice.

In the past, as today, the major problem has been coordination. Riot control plans provide for the coordination of different public and private organizations such as police departments, fire departments, ambulance services, detention facilities, parole services, state troopers, National Guard, civil defense agencies, and others. These agencies differ according to their familiarity with the local area, ethos, mission, training, and organizational structure. Not surprisingly then, the history of recent riots reveals confusion and disruption within and among organizations.¹⁰⁶ Simulated exercises may provide a better basis for evaluating these plans, although even full dress rehearsals will not reveal the problems that arise as a result of bureaucratic entanglements, political considerations, and, sometimes, rivalries between organizations. Coordination between agencies in the areas of operational planning, tactics, and weapons, and the administration of justice is required to ensure smooth procedures to effectively combat civil disorder.

Operational Planning

Effective command and control of operations require the clear designation of authority throughout the chain of command. In an emergency that involves several organizations, planning must clarify this command structure and specify the tasks and responsibilities of each agency. Recent history indicates the importance of deciding before hand whether the police chief or the guard commander will direct the operations.¹⁰⁷ Adequate command and control hinge upon intelligence capability, facilities for communication, uniform policies, and so forth.

Breakdowns in command and control have been evident in many of the high-intensity riots. During the 1967 Newark civil disorder, the commanding officers of the local police, state troopers, and national guard established their own headquarters and issued separate and sometimes contradictory orders to their men.¹⁰⁸ Even more disturbing were the events that led to the breakdown of the chain of command in the Michigan National Guard during the 1967 Detroit disorder. Desperate for help, the civilian police took control over the arriving guard units. Instead of assigning missions on a unit basis, police officers split up the disembarking guard units, and sent pairs of guardsmen to ride firetrucks, protect police vehicles, secure vital installations, and even defend the dog pound. Isolated from their units and frequently without communication, guardsmen were without officers and officers were without men to command.¹⁰⁹

Poor command and control also have hampered the fire department during many disturbances. The basic problem of combating a large number of major fires with insufficient

equipment has been aggravated by the failure of the police department to provide escorts for the firetrucks and protection at the scene. In the first instance, firemen have had difficulty reaching their destination because of traffic congestion. Moreover, firemen have not been adequately protected against harassment during many disorders.¹¹⁰ During the 1968 Chicago disorder the operations of firemen were impeded by automobiles being driven across hose lines; lines being pulled down the street; equipment being stolen from fire engines; hydrants turned on to reduce water pressure; bottles, bricks, and rocks being thrown at equipment and firemen; and sometimes by harassment by knife-wielding assailants and snipers.¹¹¹ The numerous false alarms that overloaded incoming communication and diverted scarce manpower and equipment also contributed to the general confusion.¹¹² Nerves were so thin during the 1967 Plainfield, New Jersey riot that firemen stopped responding to alarms. Because of inadequate police protection, moreover, firemen began to arm themselves with rifles and pistols.¹¹³ Since firemen are neither trained nor equipped to cope with rioters, it is essential that fire units have a military or police escort to establish a defense perimeter around the unit.¹¹⁴

Systems for collecting and evaluating intelligence data and for handling communications between agencies are essential for effective command and control of operations. All agencies for social control must cooperate in providing the decisionmakers with timely information about the rioters and their plans. Most police chiefs recognize the use of plainclothes officers and others to mingle in the crowd as an important intelligence-gathering technique. In addition to gathering intelligence data, undercover agents can combat rumors and gather legal documentation on the prominent agitators and instigators of violence. Other means of collecting information include ground and aerial observation, interviews with community leaders, interrogation of arrested individuals, and so forth.¹¹⁵

Inadequate or faulty intelligence frequently has resulted either in the underreaction or the overreaction of security forces. At the time of the Newark riot, police in other northern New Jersey communities were anticipating the eruption of serious disorders. In Elizabeth City the local police department did not properly evaluate the mood of the ghetto community. To deter rioting, the police resorted to aggressively patrolling potential trouble areas. The sight of policemen wielding shotguns elicited from Negroes a reaction that this tactic was designed to prevent. Clashes resulted between angry groups of blacks and the police.¹¹⁶

In other instances, poor intelligence led security forces to underreact. At the beginning of the Watts disturbance, the director of the Los Angeles Human Relations Commission had developed a plan for sending several hundred plainclothesmen and antipoverty workers into the riot area. Their missions in the troubled area were to counteract hostile rumors and to spread positive ones such as "the riot is over," to identify riot leaders and to make inconspicuous arrests. At first, the Deputy Chief of Police rejected this proposal because he believed that the function of the police was merely to arrest the rioters. Shortly thereafter a full-scale riot erupted. Furthermore, the downtown command post did not realize until much later that the rioting had become uncontrollable and that outside assistance was urgently required.¹¹⁷

Adequate communications facilities between control and field headquarters and between agencies are essential for the coordination of riot-control operations. Prior planning should ensure that the control agencies have special bands for emergencies and that the local police, fire department, state troopers, and national guard have at least one common emergency frequency. If the control agencies have a common frequency, the command post can maintain coordinated control over the flow of incoming and outgoing information.¹¹⁸

Units within each agency should also have the capability of communicating rapidly with their field headquarters, other agencies, and the command post. Equipping small units with

portable communications equipment will enhance the effectiveness of their operations. Miniature-sized radio equipment for individual patrolmen, firefighters, and plainclothesmen also seems warranted.¹¹⁹

In recent high-intensity riots, inadequate communication facilities have seriously impeded riot-control operations. During the Watts riot, the police department had insufficient frequencies. As a result, lines were overloaded and the dispatchers found it difficult to summon police vehicles for emergency missions. Moreover, the city police, the county police, and the fire department did not have a common frequency to "net" communications. Because equipment was not compatible, the time-consuming expedient for establishing interagency communications involved relay stations and equipment exchanges.¹²⁰

Few improvements in communication had been made by the time of Newark and Detroit. Unable to communicate by radio with police dispatchers, the arriving New Jersey state troopers could not get a clear idea of the riot perimeters or the centers of action. Hand signals and shouts were used initially to direct the troopers.¹²¹ Poor communications may also help explain the excessive use of firearms during the Detroit riot. In instances when a police officer or guardsman discharged his weapon, security forces in the vicinity concluded that the shot was fired by a sniper. In response they would then direct their firepower in the general area from which the original shot was fired. In the words of Director of Police Spina, "guardsmen were firing at police and police were firing back at them." Since indiscriminate use of weapons was taking a large toll of innocent people, the security forces were instructed to cease firing. Although most guard units received instructions promptly, evidently the police did not receive them until much later.¹²²

In addition to communications equipment for expediting the flow of information within and between agencies, there must be facilities at control headquarters to keep the public informed about the disturbance. To avoid conflicting policy statements by representatives of the various riot-control agencies, it seems advisable to have the central authority exist in a senior public information officer. He will convey to the reporters basic information concerning the character of the disturbance, restrictions and regulations on movement, the reasons for and the purpose of the actions of the security forces, and so forth.¹²³

During a high-intensity disorder, there probably will be an apparent increase in emotional level in the general community. Conflicting statements by representatives of riot-control agencies, along with sensationalist reporting by the mass media, may lead to widespread confusion and insecurity. Wild rumors about beatings and killings may increase tensions to a level approaching panic.¹²⁴ An indicator of prepanic conditions during the Watts riot was the frantic purchase of firearms by whites who lived near the riot area. Another indicator of prepanic conditions during the Detroit riot was the spreading of rumors warning that blacks were planning to invade white communities. Some whites actually organized vigilante groups to repel the threatened invasion.¹²⁵

Virtually all police departments recognize the importance of an information center or rumor central during an emergency to counter the mounting rise of tension inside and outside the riot area. Officers at the information desk can calm the fears of people inquiring about the welfare of relatives and friends in the riot area and also counter false and provocative rumors. Moreover, the rumor center can function as a source of information for the intelligence-gathering units. People in the riot area frequently will call to report information on the activities of rioters.¹²⁶

Traffic control has been a major problem during many riots. A traffic control plan may alleviate the congestion within and around the riot area. In this plan, primary routes of

access into and out of the troubled area should be specified. Only emergency vehicles such as fire equipment and ambulances and transportation for conveying troops and prisoners should be allowed access into these routes. Even the number of squad cars using the emergency routes should be kept to a minimum. They create congestion, are easy targets for the missiles and firebombs of rioters, and require large numbers of officers to defend them.¹²⁷ Therefore, it seems advisable to establish an area just outside the inner riot perimeter for parking responding police cars. From there, "paddy wagons," buses, and armored vehicles can transport officers to the scenes of rioting.

Other parts of the plan should provide for detouring traffic around the riot area. This is a critical problem since traffic on the available arteries will be extremely heavy. In fact, during many riots the traffic congestion of the city has delayed guardsmen from reaching their units within a reasonable length of time and also has delayed the mobilization of off-duty firemen and police officers.¹²⁸ Since few police officers can be spared to regulate traffic during a civil disorder, the development of an automatic emergency traffic control system may be an important innovation.

Most riot-control plans take into account the need for medical aid stations located near the tension zone to provide prompt treatment for injured security force personnel and civilians. The medical plan usually specifies the procedures for ambulance service, casualty reporting, fatality registration, and so forth.¹²⁹ Improvements can be made in these plans, however, particularly in the treatment of minor injuries.

Hopefully, the increasing reliance upon tear gas, smoke, dyes, and other nonlethal weapons will reduce the toll of the seriously injured. Respiratory and eye injuries are most common when these weapons are employed. Since the injuries usually can be treated immediately, it might be advisable to develop new concepts for the use of "medics" during civil disorders. Special first aid medic kits might be useful. They might contain eye washes and antidotes to itching or burning chemical irritants, as well as the standard complement of medical items.

Considerable improvement can be made in the equipment and supplies provided for the security forces. Since riot-control vehicles are prime targets for rioters, it is necessary to make them less vulnerable to firebombs and missiles. Although the tank is clearly inappropriate, the security forces could make greater use of armored trucks, buses, and "paddy wagons." Other protective devices, which may have some applicability, include a vehicular electrical shield, run flat tires, and infrared headlights. It also has been suggested that open jeeps and the cabs of fire vehicles be protected with a tough iron mesh. Dry chemical extinguishers should, of course, be standard equipment in all security force vehicles.

The adequacy of personal protective equipment varies among cities and states. A common complaint of guardsmen is that their helmets are too heavy and that their gas masks frequently leak. Lighter weight helmets and improved gas masks, perhaps equipped with microphones, would seem to be a logical advance. During some disorders, the local security forces did not have or did not use the standard protective equipment. Tear gas was not used during some disturbances because the police lacked gasmasks. Moreover, the police sometimes entered troubled areas without boots for protection against debris and tear gas powder and without face shields and helmets for protection against missiles.¹³⁰ All security forces, including the fire department should have the standard protective equipment—face shields, crash helmets, and gasmasks. Body pads also would be a desirable addition to the standard complement of personal protective equipment. In riots where sniping occurs, some authorities have suggested the applicability of plastic body armor.

Authorities note the importance of illuminating the troubled area without silhouetting riot-control personnel against the lights. To protect themselves against snipers, the security forces have shot out the street lights in many riot areas. As a result, security forces were somewhat hampered in their night-time operations against rioters.¹³¹ Portable lighting is important in situations when the lights are shot out as well as when the electric lighting system fails. A particularly high-intensity lighting system is desirable in business districts to discourage looting, in barricaded areas, and in locations where there are snipers. It also would be desirable to mount lighting units on helicopters and vehicles as well as on rooftops to provide satisfactory area coverage.

Roadblocks are essential in preventing unauthorized access into and out of the riot area. During some riots, however, the security forces did not have adequate material for constructing roadblocks. During the Watts riot, guardsmen stationed at access routes resorted to gunfire to stop vehicles. Loss of life and material damage resulted. To avoid a repetition of such incidents, authorities have recommended that security forces have an adequate supply of barricades available. Coils of wire, which could be dispensed quickly by spring action from a container, would be a particularly effective antipersonnel and antivehicular obstacle.¹³²

Tactics

The missions of the security forces are the protection of life and property and the apprehension of law violators. During some disorders, however, the riot-control forces employed tactics that had the contrary result of escalating the scale of violence. This may occur when the security forces evidence an inability to control the situation or when the security forces apply excessive force.¹³³ During many riots the security forces frequently have moved from a pattern of underreaction to one of overreaction, thereby inadvertently escalating the level of violence.¹³⁴

Numerous instances of inappropriate tactics are recorded. Chicago police officials underreacted at the beginning of the 1968 disturbance. Officials hesitated to request guard assistance and hoped that the county and city police departments could handle the disturbance. They spread their forces thin, deploying large numbers of policemen for precautionary reasons in the downtown business area. The remainder of the available force was deployed in the riot area.¹³⁵

The police employed tactics that clearly demonstrated their inability to control the situation. Instead of using the available manpower to protect business establishments and other major targets in the location of the disturbance, they scattered their forces throughout the riot area. Because they did not have enough men and equipment to arrest, detain, and transport prisoners, the officials dispersed groups of officers who attempted to deter rioters by weakly chasing them and scolding or insulting them. The Chicago Riot Commission observed that these tactics actually encouraged deviant behavior: "When it soon became apparent that the police were not going to take strict preventive action with manpower adequate to the task, youngsters saw an opportunity for assaulting white persons and white-owned property and for taking what they wanted from the open stores."¹³⁶

Some authorities contend that the 1964 Harlem riot was sparked by the excessive use of force. When demonstrators refused to disperse, police charged into the crowd freely swinging their batons. Many people were seriously injured with the result that the tempers of the crowd participants were inflamed. Other tactical errors were the failure to follow the dispersed groups, isolate the area, or even impose restrictions on congregation. As a result,

elements of the crowd began to reform on side streets and alleyways. Soon afterwards, they initiated acts of violence in hit-and-run guerrilla fashion.¹³⁷

Many other tactical errors were committed during the Harlem disturbance. Observers have criticized particularly the use of flying wedge tactics by police near the exists of a subway station. Innocent people emerging from the subways or just passing through the area suddenly found themselves in the path of the police wedge. Understandably, the innocent people who were injured, as well as their relatives and friends, were embittered by the incident.

Previous sections of this paper have described the emotional metamorphosis that the dissidents and the general community undergo during an intense civil disorder. These social processes may help to explain why police behavior becomes increasingly unrestrained the longer a disorder persists.¹³⁸ Studies of recent riots reveal that the security forces tend to suffer strain, anxiety, and fatigue when they are kept on duty for extended periods of time. The tension-heightening incidents for police involve taunts and insults and, frequently, bricks and bottles. Rumors of violent acts committed against fellow officers also increase tension. After a while, they may begin to believe that they are in a war and that all blacks are their enemies. Sniping incidents tend to confirm their suspicions and provide justification for revenge. During the Watts, Newark, and Detroit riots, for example, the police responded with massive firepower in the direction of unconfirmed sniping activity.¹³⁹ Moreover, the panicky use of force resulted in the physical abuse of many innocent blacks including plainclothesmen, government officials, ministers, and other counterrioters.¹⁴⁰ While such reaction engenders widespread fear in the ghetto and may deter the more timid rioters, it also can lead to an escalation in the level of black violence. This may explain why riot studies cite numerous sniping reports in the later stages of a riot while very few were reported in the beginning.¹⁴¹

In situations when the security forces become extremely emotionally involved, the commanding officers may lose control over the actions of their men. The chain of command within and between enforcement agencies, which is frequently unclear and fragile to begin with, may break down completely. Anarchy may then prevail in the riot area. "The police were out of control" is the way a high-ranking officer described the events during the climax of the Detroit riot.¹⁴²

Heated emotions may explain, in part, the opposition of some officials to the use of counterrioters. During many riots, Negroes came forth to offer their assistance. In some instances, the mayor rejected the offer and in others the mayor accepted the offer but the police did not honor it.¹⁴³ During the Watts riot, the mayor rejected the proposal to use counterrioters. In Cincinnati, the police refused to recognize the authority granted to Negroes by the mayor's office to help calm the situation in the riot area. During the Newark disturbance, the mayor and governor gave permission to Negro volunteers to help "cool" the situation. Their activities, however, were hampered by enforcement officials. According to the governor, they were harassed to such an extent by police who suspected them of involvement in the riot that they had to give up their attempts.¹⁴⁴ This pattern has been repeated in many other cities.

Official reports stress the importance of training to develop self-discipline and teamwork.¹⁴⁵ They contrast the difference between routine police training that is designed to develop officers who can work independently with little direct supervision with riot-control training that requires large numbers of disciplined personnel organized into a team under a highly unified command structure.¹⁴⁶

These same reports cite the need for improved guard training, particularly in the area of small unit tactics. They also call for closer cooperation between guard commanders and city police departments and warn against the fragmentation of guard units.¹⁴⁷

In response to official recommendations, police departments and guard forces have accelerated their riot-control training programs. Because of the practical problems associated with training an entire police force, large cities have created special riot-control units composed of high calibre officers. A major flaw in the guard and police riot-control programs is, however, the tactical training.

Tactical training still emphasizes that units of various size practice the sweep and wedge formations. Although these tactics may be important during the mobilization phase, they seem to have little value when the nature of violence involves roving bands of windowbreakers, looters, and arsonists. Most police and guard officers acknowledge the inadequacy of traditional riot-control tactics.¹⁴⁸ Nevertheless, little seems to have been done to develop new and practical tactics against rioters.

Based upon the character of recent rioting, certain general statements can be made concerning strategy and tactics. When there is a low level of violence, when there are specific issues being contended, and when there is a substantial degree of control in the ghetto by black leaders who are willing to negotiate, arguments can be advanced for withholding the mobilized police from the troubled area. The reasoning here is that precipitous police action may have the contrary effect of increasing aggressive tendencies.¹⁴⁹ Once violence attains a certain momentum, however, it appears that only the strategy of blanketing the riot area with security forces will dampen the scale of disorders.¹⁵⁰ In many instances, mobilization of the guard will be required. As noted, the security forces must conduct themselves under trying circumstances in a reasonable and self-disciplined manner. In the minds of the rioters, illegitimate behavior justifies their feelings of animosity toward the police and may lead to intensified violence.¹⁵¹

In terms of tactics, the security forces will have to search and clear the area block by block. After an area is cleared, experience has shown that it is important to station small units that will remain behind to patrol the area. Whenever possible, guards should also be positioned on rooftops to protect the exposed units on the street below. Lights can be mounted on the rooftops to illuminate the area. Restrictions on movement and congregation appear necessary. Depending upon the circumstances, violators of emergency measures either will be sent home or placed in custody. Most authorities counsel against picayune arrests.

Retail stores that are located on residential streets have been the principal targets of the rioters. It seems reasonable, therefore, to give priority in planning to clearing these areas. Protecting business establishments by a strong defensive deployment of security troops probably will frustrate the purpose of many who participate in rioting.

Prior planning should anticipate measures to sustain the morale and self-discipline of riot-control forces. Periodic duty shifts will reduce fatigue. Canteen service that provides hot meals may bolster the morale of the forces on duty. In some areas, a guard post may be necessary not only for shelter but also for protection against snipers. Establishing rapport with neighborhood residents also can reduce tensions on both sides. Under harrowing conditions during the Detroit riot, guard patrols demonstrated the ability to establish good relations with neighborhood residents. Not by coincidence, violence was minimal in these areas.¹⁵²

During a large riot, a city will need all the manpower it can muster. Because of this need, many authorities recommend taking advantage of the sizable reservoir of counterriot sentiment

that exists in the ghettos. During some riots, members of community action organizations and youth groups were used to quell rumors, urge people to go home, and suggest nonviolent means of protest. Their usual approach was to walk through the riot area urging the residents to "cool" it. At times, they took positive action such as distributing food and supplying emergency aid.¹⁵³

Considerable controversy has developed concerning the effectiveness of counterrioters. Some argue that certain counterrioters have used their privileges as a cover for deviant behavior. Others maintain that they have been ineffective and that they have even impeded police operations. The prevailing view is, however, that counterrioters can be used with some effectiveness to calm emotions.¹⁵⁴ Moreover, since the riot area may resemble an occupied camp, the use of responsible ghettoites is a way of taking some of the sting out of the humiliation that is associated with the presence of an armed force.

Weapons

Official reports recommend the development of new tactics, as well as new weapons.¹⁵⁵ Experience has shown that the standard weapons and barriers of the police and guard are inadequate for combating civil disturbances. Firearms and nightsticks are the only police weapons that usually are in adequate supply. Many authorities have criticized the excessive use of handguns in riot situations when the officer's life was not threatened. They observe that during many riots firing over the heads of rioters or using massive firepower to subdue snipers resulted in wounding or killing many innocent people.¹⁵⁶ Moreover, authorities maintain that the indiscriminate use of firearms tends to escalate the level of black violence as well.¹⁵⁷ The other traditional weapon of the police is the nightstick. Virtually all authorities agree that this weapon is effective in situations involving low levels of force. The major problem associated with the nightstick, according to many experts, is the failure of police departments to instruct their men to use this weapon properly.¹⁵⁸ For this reason, some engineers have suggested developing a damage-limiting baton which will break if it is used improperly or too vigorously.¹⁵⁹

The traditional weapons of the guard are the rifle and bayonet. For the same reasons noted for police firearms, authorities contend that in most situations the rifle is an excessively forceful instrument. Moreover, it is unwieldy as a baton. To cope with snipers, many enforcement officials recommend establishing special antismiper units instead of using inexperienced guardsmen.¹⁶⁰ In many viewpoints, the bayonet also is an inappropriate weapon. Opponents of this weapon contend that bayonets may engender the undesirable countereffect of inflaming people to greater disorder.¹⁶¹ Furthermore, the general community seems reluctant to accept the bayonet as an instrument to subdue law violators, and guardsmen, themselves, perhaps for the same reason, are reluctant to use the bayonet.¹⁶²

Because of the danger to innocent people that is associated with firearms and the limited practicality of cutting instruments, most city leaders discourage using these weapons during civil disturbances except when the life of the officer is threatened.¹⁶³ As a result of these restrictions, displaying these weapons does not have the intimidating impact on rioters that it once had. When these are the only weapons that are available during a civil disturbance, riot-control forces are in the frustrating position of having insufficient means to apprehend law violators. For this reason, officials recommend expanding the arsenal of security force weapons to include various types of middle-level or nonlethal weapons. These weapons can provide the officer in most riot situations with a suitable increment of force to achieve his lawful objectives.

There are many studies that review the advantages and disadvantages of nonlethal weapons. The most notable of these studies is by Joseph Coates who evaluates nonlethal "weapons in research and development . . . along with some new concepts and proposals." He outlines the following general criteria for consideration in applying use of any nonlethal weapon:⁶⁴

- (1) The method should itself allow for controlled increments of force and risk or should be one of a group of weapons allowing for such increments.
- (2) The device or technique should not endanger the police officer by aggravating the risk to him or by requiring him to perform in some extreme or heroic manner.
- (3) The device should not be one which will embolden the criminal by giving him the feeling that he always has a second chance or that the officer's hands are tied.
- (4) The device should not overburden the officer by requiring him either to carry more or bulkier items than are feasible or by demanding choices which are impractical in a crisis or under stress. Training can do much to mitigate the problem of choice.
- (5) The device or technique should not unnecessarily endanger or antagonize bystanders.
- (6) The device should not appear cruel or beneath human dignity even if it is non-damaging. This is a difficult criterion to interpret since it depends on both the weapon and effective community relations.
- (7) The device and method should not be provocative if it is ineffectively used.
- (8) Effectiveness should not be lost after first use against an individual or crowd, nor seriously mitigated by prior knowledge or training of those against whom it is used.
- (9) The device should be applicable to many situations if used routinely. Unusual but important situations would justify special equipment.
- (10) Derivative problems such as health and safety of those against whom the device is used, logistics of removal of victims, burdens on hospitals for temporary treatment or observation, and clean-up of streets should be taken into consideration for riot control weapons.
- (11) The use of the device should not disrupt other police function.
- (12) The weapon should be sufficiently unpleasant that it does not provoke its own use.
- (13) Techniques requiring very long training, special skills, and certain cultural commitments are generally inappropriate. Examples of the first are the whip, the lariat, and the bolas; an example of the last is the weighted cape of the French police. State and large municipal forces frequently can justify and afford quite special skills.
- (14) Control against unscrupulous use may be relevant to some weapons.

- (15) Finally, costs for the development and maintenance of the item must be taken into consideration.

In a ghetto riot situation, principal tactical problems are the isolation of the riot area, property protection, and apprehension or dispersal. In the latter case, the authorities may want to harass, immobilize, or incapacitate. Nonlethal weapons appear to be applicable in each of these tactical areas. On the basis of the dynamics of recent ghetto rioting, some supplementary observations can be made on Coates' findings within the framework of these tactical areas.

In addition to the standard alarm system, engineers have suggested automatic devices for the protection of private and public property. Among these are sprinkler systems that emit stench compounds or nauseous gases, window grills or metal shutters that transmit electrical shocks, and high-intensity lights and sounds. It appears that these devices would be useful in thwarting routine crimes as well as mass plundering. In determining the appropriateness of new protective devices, however, damage to merchandise and equipment, the clean up problem, and lawsuits arising from false detonation are hazards that must be considered. Another problem is that during a riot arsonists compensate for the frustration of looters by focusing their firebombings on business establishments protected by these devices. Buildings constructed of fire-resistant materials with plexiglass windows would be less vulnerable to the fury of arsonists as well as of looters.

Isolation of the riot location serves not only to prevent the spread of violence but also to minimize the likelihood that white vigilante groups will take the law into their hands. The level of violence in the April 1968 Jacksonville, Florida disturbance, for example, escalated dramatically after a Negro teenager was shot to death from a passing car filled with whites.¹⁶⁵

During many disorders, ecological factors have caused difficulty for riot-control forces who were trying to secure the troubled area. During the intense stages of the Watts riot, the troubled area was extensive. Unlike the housing pattern in many cities where apartment buildings are located side by side, in Watts the pattern of small housing units enabled rioters to use alleys, gardens, and driveways in moving from street to street and in dodging security forces. Because the security forces were unfamiliar with these paths, rioters found them convenient locations in which to regroup and to plan further disorders.¹⁶⁶

A lack of suitable barricades also has hampered attempts to seal off the riot area. Although for ordinary crowd control wooden horses and cross bars may be adequate, more sophisticated barricades and barriers appear to be necessary during a riot. Experience indicates that it is not advisable to use police cars as barricades. During the aftermath of the April 1968 Chicago disorder, a senior police official attested that nothing excited the rioters more than the sight of a burning police car.¹⁶⁷

In terms of cost, speed and convenience of emplacement, reusability, and effectiveness, barbed tape appears to be the most promising barricade.¹⁶⁸ Without the backup of an adequate team of officers, however, this barricade can be easily penetrated. Since it will be necessary to deny rioters access to alleyways and side streets as well as to primary routes without tying down an inordinate number of men in static defense, engineers face the problem of developing barriers and barricades which, in themselves, will prevent penetration. Various low friction polymers, slippery materials, and foam have been developed or proposed for this purpose.¹⁶⁹ Although these devices may have important application, particularly in the protection of property, there are many problems associated with their use on public routes. Improper use of these materials can result in excessive numbers of injuries and, perhaps, panic.

Furthermore, barriers such as these may present dangers to the security troops and impede access into an area of arrest vehicles, ambulances, and firefighting equipment. Certainly, greater investigation is required in developing safe and effective barriers.

In riot situations where no personal threat is posed against the life of the officer, non-lethal weapons would seem to provide suitable increments of force for the dispersal or the apprehension of law violators. Because of the strain imposed upon the court system as well as other factors, it may be desirable to be selective in arrests. In the case of minor law violators, the intention may be to drive them from the streets to their homes. Sonic ear-tridges, smoke generators, aspirated stench compounds, highly powered light guns, and so forth, might be suitable for this purpose. Dyes incorporated in smoke or nontoxic gasses show particular promise. The reasoning behind the dye is not to mark rioters for subsequent apprehension (it is doubtful whether the dye alone would provide sufficient evidence for successful prosecution) but to engender in individuals a state of anxiety sufficient to impel them to go home and remove the evidence of crowd participation. In this way, the security forces would accomplish the objective of separating the less serious-minded from the hard-core members of the rioters.

Many authorities suggest that the security forces focus their effort upon the apprehension of the instigators and agitators of violence and upon other serious offenders of the law.¹⁷⁰ Successful prosecution of key individuals in a disorder would be a far more positive deterrent to future collective violence than mass arrests and few successful prosecutions.¹⁷¹ A major problem encountered by security forces, however, is finding a way to apprehend fleeing or resisting suspects with minimal injury. Engineers report advances made in the development of weapons that would incapacitate or immobilize individuals or groups without causing permanent injury, unsightly marks, or memories. Among these are chemical grenades and darts, net snares, stenches, sticky tapes and blobs, mass projectiles, and others. Systematic evaluation is urgently needed to determine the risk and safety factors involved in using these weapons.

Problems of Justice

Most cities had prepared plans for the administration of justice in the event of large-scale civil disorder. Nevertheless, the experience of recent large-scale disorders indicates that the established procedures were inadequate to cope with the problems of apprehending, transporting, detaining, booking, and trying prisoners. Breakdowns in the administration of justice were the result of mass arrest techniques. Instead of concentrating the apprehension effort on serious offenders of the law, the police frequently resorted to the technique of wholesale arrests to clear the streets. As a result of the circumstances of quantity over quality of arrests, the police did not have adequate resources for gathering enough evidence to prosecute successfully the hard-core offenders. Large numbers of spectators and minor violators were arrested and incarcerated on the same charges as the serious offenders.¹⁷² As events turned out, the white community was dismayed by the failure of the authorities to convict the instigators of violence while the black community was angered by the conditions of prison confinement and by the harsh penalties imposed by the courts for minor violations.¹⁷³

In cities where the technique of mass arrest was used, the problems of justice began at the identification and charging stage. Arresting officers often had to work in great haste with the result that identification and charge sheets were improperly filled out. At other times, difficulties arose because harried officers did not take clear polaroid snapshots of the suspect and the charge card. Difficulties in determining the charges against prisoners were further

compounded in situations when the arresting officers turned the suspects over to other officers who were unfamiliar with the charges. Under these circumstances, the officers at the detention centers found it difficult to screen detainees properly or to determine proper grounds for booking suspects.¹⁷⁴

Fewer arrests and more systematic identification procedures could help reduce this confusion. As one tact, police vans could be converted into miniature studios: their equipment would include a video recorder, light, and microphone. The arresting officer would stand before the camera along with the suspect and, in a short narrative report, describe the nature of the offense and the charges to be made. Officers would transport the video tape along with the prisoners to the booking centers.

Suitable facilities for the transportation of prisoners to detention centers is another major problem. As previously noted, police cars were used to transport prisoners during the initial stage of the 1968 Chicago disorder. The Chicago experience indicates that police cars are unsuitable since they are prime targets for the missiles and firebombs of rioters and, furthermore, tie up many officers, deflecting them from more necessary tasks.¹⁷⁵ At present, for transporting prisoners the "paddy wagon" and bus are preferred by local officials. Many problems are associated with these vehicles, however, particularly with the bus. They are vulnerable to damage from vandals as well as from prisoners inside the vehicle. On occasion, moreover, inadequate safety provision resulted in serious injury to passengers and in the initiation of civil actions against the police department. For these and other reasons, it seems advisable to consider proposals for modifying existing conveyances or for developing new ones incorporating new safety features.

Overcrowded detention facilities caused prisoners in recent riots to suffer serious abuses and deprivations and caused officials acute embarrassment. During the Detroit riot, juveniles and adults of both sexes were crammed together in the same facilities. When room no longer was available in the regular detention facilities, prisoners were herded for detention into underground police garages. Other suspects were held for more than twenty-four hours in "paddy wagons" and buses.¹⁷⁶ Because of inadequate planning, other riot-torn cities also were not prepared to handle the massive influx of prisoners. In Newark, "a large portion of those arrested were held in an armory without proper food, water, toilet, or medical facilities. Prisoners had no way to contact their lawyers or relatives."¹⁷⁷ Not surprisingly, the absence of information about the welfare of relatives and friends engendered more hostile rumors and thus further raised the level of tension in the riot area.

Cramped, unsanitary detention facilities cast a stigma upon the system of justice in the United States. If mass arrests are anticipated during future emergencies, authorities must plan to transport prisoners to jails and prison camps in adjoining jurisdictions and in other parts of the state and to establish temporary detention centers. At the prison camps, plans must be made to provide proper medical care, food, sanitary facilities, and communications with the outside. Communication privileges for detainees will do much to calm the fears of anguished families. Juveniles will, of course, require special handling, and adults should be separated according to the seriousness of the offense.

The problem of booking prisoners was related directly to the haste with which identification was established and charge sheets were filled out. In many cases, booking officers found that they could not match the charge sheet with the arriving suspect. At times, they could not even find the charge sheet.¹⁷⁸ If the city had vans outfitted with video equipment, the problem of identification would be minor. Officers would transport the video tape made at the arrest scene to the detention facility along with the prisoners. At the custodial facility, the booking

officers would observe replays of the tape cartridge to obtain information about the suspects coming in and to charge them formally.

Once the formal charges have been made, procedures must be established to ensure that the booking records and other data are not lost. Unsystematic record-keeping during some riots caused the loss of booking sheets and other information with the result that at times the whereabouts of prisoners could not be ascertained.¹⁷⁹ To simplify the booking and record-keeping procedures, the Kerner Commission recommends that cities adopt the multiple-use form originally devised by the Department of Justice for processing large numbers of demonstrators. Single copies of this form are dispensed at key points through which suspects pass. A copy of the form is also sent to the Bureau of Prisons where a central index is kept of all persons apprehended during the riot.¹⁸⁰

Mass arrests also severely taxed the capabilities of the lower court system. Trials and sentences conducted on an "assembly line" basis demeaned the quality of justice dispensed by the courts.¹⁸¹ In the first instance, insufficient legal documentation had been collected to convict persons charged with serious crimes. Many of these persons stood trial on the same charges as minor violators. Unable to pinpoint blame for the riots on a selected group of culprits, the community expressed its indignation by urging harsh penalties for all those arrested. In this context, it is understandable why the Kerner report notes that harsh penalties frequently were imposed upon minor violators at the time of extreme community tensions. On the other hand, the Commission found that sentences more adequately reflected the seriousness of the offense in trials that were held after emotions had subsided.¹⁸² For this reason, justice will prevail if trials are deferred until tensions diminish. During a riot emergency, moreover, it is essential that courts adhere to established criteria for policies concerning arraignment, counseling, screening, and release. In the administration of justice, the Kerner report also notes the following considerations:¹⁸³

Riot defendants should be considered individually. They are less likely to be hardened, experienced criminals. A presentence report should be prepared in all cases where a jail sentence or probation may result. The task of imposing penalties for many riot defendants which will deter and rehabilitate is a formidable one. A general policy should be adopted to give credit on jail sentences for preconviction detention time in riot cases.

After the riot is over, a residue of difficult legal tasks will remain: proceedings to litigate and compensate for injustices—false arrests, physical abuses, property damage—committed under the stress of riot; actions to expunge arrest records acquired without probable cause; restitution policies to encourage looters to surrender goods. Fair, even compassionate attention to these problems will help reduce the legacy of postriot bitterness in the community.

POSTHOSTILE OUTBURST PHASE

The post-hostile outburst phase may be divided into an immediate and derived stage. Whereas the immediate stage concerns to short-range measures to reestablish normalcy, the derived stage encompasses the long-range rehabilitative programs designed to restore the confidence of aggrieved ghettoites in the established channels for social redress. In this schema, then, the conditions for deterring violence at the derived stage are the same as those outlined in the premobilization phase (see pages 26-30).

Immediate Stage

This period of time begins when the riot-control forces have reestablished law and order. At this stage, emergency provisions are made for the care of the dispossessed, cases are prepared for the prosecution of those arrested, and the adequacy of control measures are reviewed. On the basis of the information gathered on the difficulties encountered during the riot, authorities may recommend improvements in planning, coordination, personnel, equipment, tactics, and so forth.¹⁸⁴

Building or reestablishing public confidence in the legal channels for redress is critical in preventing future disorders. For this reason, officials recognize the importance of listening to the complaints and investigating the accusations of those who live inside as well as outside of the riot area. Insensitivity to common grievances and beliefs will only increase animosity and reinforce distrust, and thereby engender situations leading to new acts of aggression.¹⁸⁵

Derived Stage

This is the critical time when all segments of the community, public and private, must work to remove or alleviate the conditions conducive to violence. Unfortunately, however, postriot studies do not reveal much that would lead to a relaxation of tensions. Instead of developing a dialogue within the community that could produce greater cooperation, the discussion usually is reduced to accusations and counteraccusations concerning the causes of the rioting and what the rioting itself has accomplished. Usually the arguments are resolved in favor of a larger police budget. According to the investigations of the Kerner Commission, the failure or the inability to confront the real issues has led to greater polarization between black and white.¹⁸⁶

Many prominent authorities on social trends in the United States make gloomy prognostications. In essence, they maintain that the nature of the conflict in our cities (as well as on our campuses) is changing and that, along with this change, violence may attain a new level of expression. During the early 1960's conflict was focused upon specific issues—inferior schools, poor housing, and so forth. It became apparent to the dissidents, however, that social injustices could not be immediately eradicated.¹⁸⁷ As current events testify, the conflict situation has escalated from local issues to a questioning of some of the basic values and institutions of our society. Direct action is increasingly seen as the most effective method for resolving social problems while the traditional channels of redress are considered antiquated and cumbersome by comparison.

Many explanations are cited in support of the contention that violence could attain a new dimension of expression. Failure to confront the issues has aggravated the strains and cleavages in our society. Groups of young people have manifested their frustration by flocking to the ranks of extremist groups that increasingly espouse violence as a legitimate form of protest.¹⁸⁸ Even traditional youth gangs in the ghetto now seem to have a conscious political orientation.¹⁸⁹ On the other hand, the police are better organized and equipped to cope with rioting. Furthermore, the incentive to riot for profit is substantially reduced in areas where business establishments are still vacated. For these and other reasons, many social scientists believe that in the future dissent is less likely to be expressed spontaneously. According to Morris Janowitz, "escalated rioting" and mass looting seems to be changing to a pattern of "more premeditated and more regularized" acts of violence.¹⁹⁰

NOTES

PREFACE

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² T. M. Tomlinson, "The Development of a Riot Ideology Among Urban Negroes," American Behavioral Scientist, II, No. 4 (March-April 1968), p. 29.

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⁴ Anthony Oberschall, "The Los Angeles Riot of August 1965," Social Problems, XV, No. 3 (Winter 1968), p. 323.

⁵ Joseph F. Coates, Nonlethal Weapons for Use by U. S. Law Enforcement Officers (S-271) (Arlington, Va., Institute for Defense Analyses, November 1967), p. 27.

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¹⁸⁴ Momboisse, Riots, Revolts and Insurrections, pp. 352-354.

¹⁸⁵ Jones, Combating Subversively Manipulated Insurgencies, pp. 54-56.

¹⁸⁸ U.S. Riot Commission, National Advisory Commission, p. 65.

¹⁸⁷ Waskow, From Race Riot to Sit-In, supra.

¹⁸⁸ Downes, "The Black Protest Movement," p. 39.

¹⁸⁹ Janowitz, Social Control, p. 19.

¹⁹⁰ Ibid., pp. 18-19.

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